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THE IMAGE OF THE LABYRINTH
IN REPRESENTATIVE WORKS OF
JOYCE, KAFKA, BORGES AND ROBBE-GRILLET

BY

CECILE A. LAFONTAINE

A THESIS

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EDMONTON, ALBERTA

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled ....THE IMAGE OF THE LABYRINTH IN REPRESENTATIVE WORKS OF JOYCE, KAFKA, BORGES, AND ROBBE-GRILLET.......

submitted by ....CECILE A. LAFONTAINE.......

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of ....ARTS.......

....

Supervisor

....

....

Date ....Sept. 27., 1974.

ABSTRACT

The labyrinth is a common and concrete image in the works of Joyce, Kafka, Borges and Robbe-Grillet. For our purpose, we define an image as a form, a construct, and a figuration. We define the labyrinth as any enclosure which entraps a wanderer.

From an analysis of the labyrinth construct, various figurations and related themes are delineated. The many figurations may be divided into two general types: the geographical and the architectural. To illustrate, natural spaces like an island or the universe itself enclose. Man-made labyrinths like corridors, towers, and even larger entities as cities are considered labyrinths. We also regard the novel or a work of art as an extension of an architectural labyrinth. Labyrinths are spaces or loci where imprisonment, initiation and descents into hell occur. Our emphasis is always on the labyrinth figuration or construct, however, many integral themes to modern literature are intuited: "égarement" or wandering, waiting, alienation, metamorphosis, the double, infinity and eternal recurrence.

Because our aim is to identify labyrinth images in the works studied, our method is always a close analysis of texts. Our discussions revolve around two pivot points: the labyrinth constructs and the wanderer within. In order to situate our authors in a traditional context, we have found it valuable to append to our main study a brief survey of the labyrinth in literature.

We have chosen to explore the labyrinth image in the following works: James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, Franz Kafka's "The Great Wall of China," "The Burrow," and The Castle,

Jorge Luis Borges' "Ibn Hakkan al-Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth," "Death and the Compass," "The God's Script," "The Immortal," "The House of Asterion," and "The Library of Babel," and Alain Robbe-Grillet's Dans le labyrinthe. We prove in our thesis that in Joyce, the image is both an open and closed construct. In regards to Kafka, the center of the labyrinth is unattainable. In Borges, we distinguish that there are decipherable and indecipherable mazes. To Robbe-Grillet, the open labyrinth is where a soldier wanders, and the closed labyrinth is where an author writes. It is our contention that due to our authors' use of a common image, they utilize similar figurations and related themes.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Professor P.A. Robberecht, to Professor M.V. Dimić for reading my manuscript, and to the four writers, whose work I have studied in this thesis and with whom I have known fellowship in my journey through the labyrinth.

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A word should be said concerning the method adopted for the presentation of quotations from works in languages other than English or French. I have used translations only, except where the exact words were particularly important or when a translation was unavailable.

INTRODUCTION

> ... une oeuvre d'homme n'est rien d'autre que ce long
> cheminement pour retrouver par les détours de l'art
> les deux ou trois images simples et grandes sur lesquelles
> le coeur, une première fois, s'est ouvert.[1]

The labyrinth is such a basic and concrete image for the four authors in our study. We propose to investigate the image of the labyrinth in representative works of James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges and Alain Robbe-Grillet. For our purpose, the word image implies a visual reality, a form, a construct and a figuration. This thesis does not limit itself to the original labyrinth design. We define the labyrinth as any closed space which entraps a wanderer.

Since our adopted definition of the labyrinth is so extensive, various figurations should be delineated. These images may divide themselves into two major categories: the geographical and the architectural. Natural spaces like an island, or a forest, or a desert, or the universe itself enclose. In a geographical labyrinth, one is confined to a limited space like an island or is imprisoned in an infinite expanse like the universe. Tunnels, vaults, corridors, staircases, caves, towers, burrows and larger entities as cities are considered architectural labyrinths.

Labyrinths are places where imprisonment, initiation and descents into hell occur. Therefore, we will now review related themes that are inherent to the labyrinth image. The fundamental themes which emerge from the labyrinth construct are those of enclosure and initiation. From the point of view of the itinerant in the labyrinth, additional themes as "égarement," waiting, metamorphosis and the double may be discerned. The concept of the infinite and of eternal recurrence are further themes associated with the labyrinth image.

In regards to the form and the meaning of the labyrinth construct, a few theorists have postulated noteworthy interpretations. We will consider the ideas of Brion, Santarcangeli, Poulet, Bachelard, Eliade and Christ. Brion distinguishes two motifs which comprise the labyrinth: the spiral and the braid. The spiral is an open form which leads to a center. The myth of initiation corresponds to this pattern. Contrary to the open spiral configuration, the braid is "une prison sans possibilité d'évasion."[2] The spiral and the braid, on another level of interpretation, are forms which represent the themes of infinity and eternal recurrence: "l'infini perpétuellement en devenir de la spirale, laquelle, théoriquement du moins peut être pensée sans achèvement, et l'infini de l'éternel retour figuré par la tresse."[3]

Similarly, Santarcangeli in his book on the labyrinth myth and symbol concludes that efferent and afferent movements are possible within a labyrinth.

> Sarà la fusione dei fattori interni e di quelli esterni a fornire il tempo vero necessario per raggiungere la camera segreta - se consideriamo la situazione labirintica come "centripeta" - o per tornare alla libertà- se la consideriamo come "centrifuga."[4]

Georges Poulet's definition of the labyrinth includes both the concepts of imprisonment and of vastness. "Bref, le labyrinthe est une prison sans murs, ou du moins, sans bornes, une prison qui emprisonne non par privation d'espace mais par excès de celui-ci."[5] Poulet also observes that the themes of "égarement," and of infinity are related to a few particular labyrinth figurations like a forest, the universe and a cell:

> Etre perdu - perdu dans une forêt, perdu dans l'univers, perdu dans la profondeur de sa propre existence, c'est la même chose que d'être incarcéré dans l'immense, que d'avoir pour geôle l'infini.[6]

Bachelard's exploration of the labyrinth artifact concentrates primarily on the climate of anxiety and oppression which surrounds any journeyer in a maze. Bachelard notes how this fear is primeval: "... le labyrinthe est une souffrance première, une souffrance de l'enfance."[7] This apprehension and fearful uneasiness resembles the dread and disorientation that accompanies dreams and nightmares: "avoir peur est une situation première qu'il faut savoir toujours traduire objectivement et subjectivement. Le cachot est cauchemar et le cauchemar est un cachot. Le labyrinthe est un cachot allongé..." [8]

Traditional labyrinth constructs such as caves, temples and tombs are loci were initiation rites happen. Mircea Eliade explains the meaning of the initiate's quest to find the center of the labyrinth in Le Mythe de l'éternel retour. This center is the sacred place of rebirth and absolute knowledge.

> Le "Centre" est donc la zone du sacré par excellence, celle de la réalité absolue....La route menant au centre est une "route difficile"...égarements dans le labyrinthe;... Le chemin est ardu, semé de périls, parce qu'il est, en fait, un rite de passage du profane au sacré; de l'éphémère et de l'illusoire à la réalité et à l'éternité; de la mort à la vie; de l'homme à la divinité." [9]

The labyrinth may be either decipherable or indecipherable. To someone lost in a labyrinth, the pattern of the tortuous passages cannot be resolved. However, when a labyrinth is viewed from the exterior, the chaos should reveal an intelligible design. Applied to the level of art, this fact represents artistic composition and apprehension. This explication is indicated by Ronald Christ in a study on Borges:

> ... the labyrinth whose structure is open to our view so that we experience it as labyrinthine and yet are not prisoners of its deceptions. It is the labyrinth of art.[10]

Following this enumeration of some of the principal theories of the labyrinth, and before the presentation of our method, let us disclose a few interesting affinities that unite our four authors. Because of the use of a common image, the labyrinth, we may confirm that Borges and Robbe-Grillet are aware of Joyce and Kafka as predecessors. Rodriguez - Monegal has mentioned that some of Borges' favorite authors are Joyce and Kafka because they have "given the theme of the labyrinth an important place in their respective work."[11]

Borges has written essays on Joyce in order to introduce this author to Latin America. He has also expressed his desire to translate Ulysses. In addition, Borges, in a few poems dedicated to Joyce, admires this solitary and ingenious writer.[12] Concerning Borges' relation to Kafka, he has translated a few of the short works as "La metamorfosis," "La edificación de la muralla china," "Un artista del hambre," "Un artista del trapecio."[13] Due to these particular translations which include various labyrinth figurations, Borges was inspired in the composition of his own fiction. "Certainly, we can see the imprint of his favorite Kafka story, "The Great Wall of China," on "The Lottery in Babylon" and "The Library of Babel";..."[14] Authors and critics as diverse as Mauriac, Sabato, Updike, Maurois, Brion, Réda, Flügel and Lange underline points of comparison that exist between Borges and Kafka. To demonstrate the relations, let us take cognizance of a few critical statements. Mauriac in "Naturalisme pas mort..." reports that "ce Borges... cette espèce de Kafka qui ne prendrait pas son labyrinthe au tragique et qui s'y perdrait et nous y perdrait à sa suite avec délice...."[15] Sabato discerns the differences between these authors' interpretation of the labyrinth image:

> Si se comparan alguno de los laberintos de Ficciones con los de Kafka,... los de Borges son de tipo geométrico o ajedrecistico y producen una angustia intelectual,... los de Kafka, en cambio, son corredores oscuros, sin fondo, inescrutables, y la angustia es una angustia de pesadilla,... 16

However, Brion finds similarities between Borges and Kafka:

> Le vertige métaphysique dans lequel nous plongent les livres du grand écrivain argentin, découle d'un concept d'angoisse, qui a été familier déjà à Kierkegaard et à Kafka: architecte de labyrinthes intellectuels, Borges est bien de leur famille....[17]

Robbe-Grillet recognizes the importance of Kafka in the development of the modern novel. In an interview, he stated that "... je tiens à dire que le 'nouveau roman' a commencé depuis longtemps. Depuis Kafka, à mon avis."[18] In an essay, "Du Réalisme à la réalité," Robbe-Grillet draws attention to Kafka's concrete settings: "Peut-être les escaliers de Kafka mènent-ils ailleurs, mais eux sont là, et on les regarde, marche par marche, en suivant le détail des barreaux et de la rampe."[19] Accordingly, critics like Dorrit Cohn and Olga Bernal have established correspondences between these two authors. In the article, "Castles and Anti-Castles, or Kafka and Robbe-Grillet," Cohn notes:

> Perhaps closest to Kafka's cityscapes is the urban

> geography of In the Labyrinth, for here circularity is compounded by radical disorientation as all fixed points of reference dissolve in the eternal return of snowy streets with tracks, lampposts, uniform rows of identical tenements and identical tenants.[20]

Bernal adduces that a common theme links Kafka to Robbe-Grillet:

> Tout le roman de Kafka est hanté par l'absence de quelque chose de fondamental. Si cette absence est le sujet propre du récit kafkaien, il est impossible de méconnaitre le lien qui va de Kafka à Robbe-Grillet.[21]

Furthermore, Borges is central to Robbe-Grillet and the "nouveau roman." Indeed, the French novelist has avowed this indebtedness: "... venus à Buenos Aires pour la réunion du P.E.N. Club de 1962, Alain Robbe-Grillet et Michel Butor ont déclaré à qui voulait les entendre qu'ils avaient subi l'influence de Borges."[22] To conclude, Jean Ricardou attests to Borges seminal role. He quite rightly places Borges at the center of the new novelists and their labyrinths.

> Les différentes voies de leurs labyrinthes sont essentiellement les divers plans de réalité ... On reconnait là le principe plus ou moins intuitif de Dans le labyrinthe, Degrés, La route des Flandres... pour se limiter à Robbe-Grillet, Butor Simon.
> ... Si de jeunes romanciers, ainsi, s'efforcent à leur façon ... de composer ce contradictoire livre de Ts'ui Pên, on peut être assuré que Borges se trouve au centre de leurs préoccupations. Ils se veulent inspirés par The god of the labyrinth.[23]

At this point, it seems advisable to outline the method of approach employed in this thesis. With respect to our study of the image of the labyrinth in representative works of Joyce, Kafka, Borges, and Robbe-Grillet, our procedure is at all times a close analysis of the texts. In general, our discussions are from two points of view, the labyrinth construct and the wanderer within. We consider in detail various labyrinth figurations and their constituent or related themes. Each author is examined in a similar manner. Because of this, comparisons, although not stated directly, may be inferred. We have restricted ourselves to a very literal understanding of the image and we have not included such levels as psychology, religion or metaphysics in our exploration of this topic.

Due to our interest in the image of the labyrinth, we found it worthwhile to investigate the tradition that preceded and proceeded our four authors. The first chapter of this thesis attempts to trace this tradition. The appendix endeavors to list a few modern novelists who have used the labyrinth.

NOTES

[1] Albert Camus, "Préface: L'Envers et l'endroit," *Essais*, ed. R. Quilliot and L. Faucon (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 13.

[2] "Le Thème de l'entrelacs et du labyrinthe dans l'oeuvre de Leonard de Vinci," *Revue d'Esthétique*, 5, No. 1 (janv.-mars 1952), 23.

[3] Ibid., p. 24.

[4] *Il Libro dei labirinti. Storia di un mito e di un simbolo* (Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1967), p. 355.

[5] "Piranèse et les poètes romantiques français," *Trois Essais de mythologie romantique* (Paris: José Corti, 1966), p. 155.

[6] Ibid., pp. 155-6.

[7] "Le Labyrinthe," *La Terre et les rêveries du repos* (Paris: José Corti, 1948), p. 217.

[8] Ibid., pp. 225-6.

[9] *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour. Archétypes et répétition*, rev. ed. (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), p. 30.

[10] *The Narrow Act. Borges' Art of Allusion* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1969), p. 173.

[11] "Symbols in Borges' Work," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 19, No. 3 (Autumn 1973), 332.

[12] Borges' essays on Joyce are: "Fragmento sobre Joyce," *Sur*, No. 77 (febr. 1941), 60-2; "Joyce y los neologismos," *Sur*, No. 62 (nov. 1939), 59-61; "El Ulises de Joyce," *Proa*, No. 6 (1925), 3-6. Rodriguez-Monegal in *Borgès par lui-même*, trans. Françoise-Marie Rosset (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1970), p. 8 writes that "pendant de nombreuses années, il rêve de traduire *Ulysse*." Borges' poems on Joyce may be found in *Elogio de la Sombra* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969), "James Joyce" p. 35 and "Invocación a Joyce" pp. 115-6.

[13] Borges has also translated "Una cruza," "El buitre," "El escudo de la ciudad," "Prometeo," "Una confusión cotidiana." All these are found in the book entitled *La metamorfosis* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1943).

[14] J.E. Irby, "Introduction," Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. X1X.

[15] Le Figaro littéraire, 17 août 1957, p. 1.

[16] "Los relatos de Jorge Luis Borges," Sur, 14 (marzo 1945), 71.

[17] "Masques, mirroirs, mensonges et labyrinthe," L'Herne, 1964, p. 322. Jacques Réda in "Commentaire de L'Immortel de Jorge-Luis Borges," Cahiers du Sud, 54, No. 370 (fév.-mars 1963), 455 writes: "Je n'ai pas l'illusion de pouvoir ajouter en quelques lignes rien de très neuf sur le parallélisme évident de l'auteur des Fictions et de celui du Château, ni d'être le premier à attirer l'attention des lecteurs du nouveau roman sur la parenté de Borgès avec Robbe-Grillet, autre amateur impénitent de labyrinthes." For further statements concerning Borges and Kafka see John Updike, "The Author as Librarian," New Yorker, 30 Oct. 1965, p. 244; Heinz Flügel, "Die Welt- Ein Labyrinth; Begegnung mit dem Dichter Jorge Luis Borges," Gestalt Gedanke Geheimnis, eds. Rolf Bohnsack, Hellmut Heeger, and Wolf Hermann (Berlin: Verlag 'Die Spur' Herbert Dorbandt KG, 1967), p. 88; André Maurois, "Preface," Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings, p. X; Victor Lange, "Preface," Dreamtigers, trans. Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970), p. X1X.

[18] Pierre Mazars, "Robbe-Grillet: 'Le nouveau roman remonte à Kafka," Le Figaro littéraire, 15 sept. 1962, p. 1. Insofar as the relations between Joyce and Robbe-Grillet and their respective use of the labyrinth image are concerned, Jacques Borel in "Petite introduction à l'Ulysse de Joyce," Les Temps Modernes, 23, No. 260 (janvier 1968), p. 1306 writes: "Le thème joycien du labyrinthe se retrouve chez Robbe-Grillet, et il n'est pas jusqu'à l'objectivité et au "réalisme" de Joyce qui ne soient une puissante incitation pour le nouveau roman, tout amputés qu'ils soient, dans ce dernier, de la visitation illuminante de "l'épiphanie" joycienne."

[19] Pour un nouveau roman (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963), p. 180.

[20] Novel, 5, No. 1 (Fall 1971), 23.

[21] Alain Robbe-Grillet: le roman de l'absence (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), p. 118.

[22] Sylvia Molloy, "Jorge Luis Borges," La Diffusion de la littérature Hispano-Américaine en France au XXe siècle (Paris:

Presses Universitaires de France, 1972), p. 233.

[23] "The god of the labyrinth," L'Herne, 1964, p. 125.

CHAPTER 1

TRADITION

Before a brief survey of the labyrinth image and its interpretation in various literary epochs, an account of the original mazes and of the myth is in order. The Egyptians were the earliest constructors of labyrinths. These temples were built near a pyramid. Secret passages were later added for the purpose of protection. According to Herodotus, one of the first historians to describe labyrinths, the beauty and the complexity of these structures educed wonder.

> ... the passages through the houses, and the varied windings of the paths across the courts, excited in me infinite admiration, as I passed from the courts into chambers, and from the chambers into colonnades, and from the colonnades into fresh houses, and again from these into courts unseen before.[1]

The temples also served as places of religious rites. In the center of the labyrinth, rituals in honor of the death and resurrection of Osiris were performed. A bull or man representing the king-god was slain. This sacrifice was deemed to possess mysterious invigorating power, through it man was able to overcome death and experience a renewal of life. As temple and as tomb, it was the center of sacred initiations.

The Cretan labyrinth, according to legend, owes its design to the Egyptian models. Pliny believes Daedalus was inspired by this prototype.

> ... there is no doubt that Daedalus adopted it as the model for the labyrinth built by him in Crete, but that he reproduced only a hundredth part of it containing passages that wind, advance and retreat in a bewilderingly intricate manner.[2]

The myth of the Cretan labyrinth involves three major figures: Minos, Daedalus and Theseus. Minos had a labyrinth built at his court to confine and protect the minotaur. This monster, with the head of a bull and the body of a man, was conceived by Minos' wife Pasiphae. After the birth of the minotaur, every nine years, seven youths and maidens were condemned to die wandering in the labyrinth or reaching the center and being killed by the monster.

Daedalus was the architect of the labyrinth. This clever artificer designed a very intricate structure which he alone could decipher. When Ariadne sought Daedalus' assistance to unravel the labyrinth, he gave her a clue, a ball of thread. Because Daedalus divulged this secret, he and his son Icarius were imprisoned in the labyrinth by Minos. However, both the father and the son built wax wings and attempted to escape. The flight proved to be unfortunate. Icarius flew too near the sun and drowned. Daedalus found asylum in Sicily.

Theseus, guided by Ariadne's thread, sought the center of the labyrinth and slayed the minotaur. It is interesting to note and compare various episodes evolving from this legend. It is unknown if the confrontation of Theseus with the minotaur occured precisely in the labyrinth. Researchers even doubt that he killed the minotaur.[3]

The dissemination of the labyrinth myth can be traced in the works of eminent Greek and Roman authors. In the Illiad (Bk. 18, 590-92)

Homer alludes to Daedalus' labyrinth.

> And the renowned smith of the strong arms made elaborate on it
> a dancing floor, like that which once in the wide spaces of Knosos
> Daidalos built for Ariadne of the lovely tresses.[4]

This replica of the Cretan dancing floor is inscribed on Achilleus' sword.

Two Greek plays deal with episodes of Theseus' life although not with the labyrinth image: Sophocles' Oedipus at Colonus and Euripides' The Suppliant Women. Sophocles also wrote a tragedy entitled Daedalus of which only a few fragments survive.[5]

In Vergil's The Aeneid (Bk. 5, 588-91), the Trojan games played by youths are compared in intricacy to the Cretan labyrinth.

> Men tell how once, in Crete, the labyrinth,
> with its impenetrable walls and winding paths,
> had a thousand tricky turns that made all guides
> useless: the route could never be retraced.[6]

Before Aeneas' descent into the underworld, the myth of the labyrinth is retold. (Bk. 6, 14-33)

Ovid presents the story of Minos and Theseus in The Metamorphoses. (Bk. 8) He mentions Daedalus' plan to build a labyrinth thus: "So Daedalus designed his winding maze;/ And as one entered it, only a wary mind/ Could find an exit to the world again-/ Such was the cleverness of that strange arbour." [7]

Apollodorus in La Biblioteca (111, 1, 3-4) writes about the myth of the minotaur:

> And she gave birth to Asterius, who was called the Minotaur.
> He had the face of a bull, but the rest of him was human; [8]

Plutarch in his Life of Theseus relates the hero's complete career. His life is paralleled to that of Romulus: both were founders of great cities and both were distinguished leaders. [9]

Many other Greek and Roman men of letters wrote about Theseus and the labyrinth. Bacchylides, the rival of Pindar, composed a poem on Theseus. Catullus often makes incidental allusions to the image of the labyrinth. In poem 64, for example, he recounts how:

> ...Theseus capsized the bull-monster
>
> Then fingering the thread
> he turned his feet back,
> along the delusive maze
> of palace corridors,
> stepped out of the labyrinth.[10]

Historians and geographers like Diodorus, Strabo and Pausanias also reveal details of interest concerning the ancient labyrinths.

The myth of the labyrinth varied according to different historical periods and literary traditions. During the Middle Ages, when crusades and pilgrimages were an essential part of religious life, mosaics were etched on cathedral floors and became: "le pèlerinage sur place, ... [où] le pèlerin sur place apportait cette intensité de foi, d'amour, d'énergie, d'enthousiasme, qui animait le voyageur aux pays d'Orient."[11] To thread through a labyrinth pattern inlaid on the cathedral grounds was considered a symbolic substitute for a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The devotee hoped to find his way in the "Chemin de Jérusalem" and finally reach the center, the "Sancta Ecclesia". A few of these remaining labyrinths may be found in the cathedrals at Reims, Amiens, Saint-Quentin, Saint-Omer, Chartres, Ravenna, Pavia, and Rome. Robert Mallet in _Jardins et paradis_ explains the importance of the labyrinth to the Middle Ages:

> ...le labyrinthe,... est né au Moyen Age d'un sentiment de piété. Les Palais de Dédale, microcosmes à la fois ouverts et fermés, symbolisaient toujours une "quête": d'abord celle de l'âme à la recherche de la Grâce, le dragon infernal étant la transposition du Minotaure. Puis l'héroisme en action des

> Croisades y trouva son symbole au même titre peut-être que l'héroisme légendaire des romans bretons qui avaient déjà introduit dans la littérature le mythe du verger enchanté.[12]

Dante's The Divine Comedy has the spiral form as its architecture. In their labyrinthine ascent of the naked rock of Mount Purgatory, Dante and Vergil journey through symmetrical and vast terraces; in their descent into hell, they traverse a funnel-shaped pit of nine concentric circles. In the seventh circle of hell, Vergil and Dante, meet the minotaur who must exist in a labyrinth even after death: "...on the edge of the broken chasm was outstretched the infamy of Crete that was conceived in the pretended cow. And when he saw us he gnawed himself, like one that bursts with inward rage."[13]

Dante's pilgrims voyage in a spiral-labyrinth and the center to be reached is paradise. Likewise, Comenius' The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart (1663) and John Bunyan's The Pilgrim's Progress (1678) are structured on the "mythe de passage" and the labyrinth motif.[14] In the former work, Comenius compares the Cretan labyrinth to his contemporary society:

> "Hast thou heard of the labyrinth of Crete?" ...
> "It was a wonder of the world, a building consisting of so many chambers, closets, and corridors, that he who entered it without a guide walked and blundered through it in every direction, and never found the way out. But this was nothing compared to the way in which the labyrinth of this world is fashioned, particularly in these times.[15]

The 'Celestial City' at the center of the labyrinth is the ultimate goal for authors like Dante or Bunyan and for the medieval pilgrim deciphering the paths of a cathedral maze. However, to a representative Renaissance painter like Leonardo da Vinci, man is at the median of the labyrinth. The maze or "knot" designs of Leonardo da Vinci and Dürer, where the artists' names are engraved at the center, manifest this Renaissance revolution from the religious to the secular. The Renaissance artist also attempted to revitalize the labyrinth tradition and to create more ingenious and bold artifacts.

In The Breaking of the Circle, Marjorie Hope Nicolson contends that the "Circle of Perfection" which had been a symbol for the world of Aristotle, Augustine, Dante and Shakespeare was shattered by the new scientific discoveries and philosophic doctrines. Her method of approach is very pertinent to our topic. In her introduction, she states her reason for studying circle imagery.

> The cosmology of the Renaissance poets,... was most often interpreted in terms of the circle- a circle that existed in the perfect spheres of the planets, in the circular globe, in the round head of man. This was not mere analogy to them; it was truth. God had made all things in the universe, the world, and the body of man as near his own symbol, the perfect circle, ...[16]

The Baroque age, like our contemporary culture, was fascinated by the labyrinth design. Scholars of this period, as E.R. Curtius, Jean Rousset and Wylie Sypher are in accord with Hocke's assertion that "le motif du labyrinthe reparaît sous une forme quasi "explosive" aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles, de même qu'entre 1880 et 1950."[17] The Baroque is a recurrent style alternating with periods of classicism: " a cycle of mannerism- baroque- rococo seems to repeat itself during the renaissance and the nineteenth century,... "[18]

Authors as diverse as Pascal, Addison, George Herbert and Pope describe man's relation to God and the universe using the labyrinth image. The universe as an island where man is a castaway without means of escape and condemned to wander and die is one of Pascal's most powerful images of man's condition and suggests the fate of any prisoner in the labyrinth.

> ... j'entre en effroi comme un homme qu'on aurait porté endormi dans une île déserte et effroyable, et qui s'éveillerait sans connaître où il est, et sans moyen d'en sortir.[19]

Joseph Addison in Cato professes that the path to God is, indeed, labyrinthine:

> The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate,
> Puzzled in mazes, and perplex'd with errors;
> Our understanding traces 'em in vain,
> Lost and bewilder'd in the fruitless search;
> Nor sees with how much art the windings run,
> Nor where the regular confusion ends.[20]

George Herbert's vision of humanity is similar to Pascal's and Addison's, nevertheless, he addresses God with the utmost confidence:

> Yet through the labyrinths, not my grovelling wit,
> But thy silk twist led down from heav'n to me
> Did both conduct and teach me how by it
> To climb to thee.[21]

In his An Essay on Man, Alexander Pope also sees the universe as a labyrinth: "A mighty maze! but not without a plan;..."[22]

The tradition of the labyrinth image as illustrative of man's forlorn search for meaning and for a God at the center of the universe was continued in the Romantic period. Goethe in his dedication to Faust refers to the labyrinth: "Der Schmerz wird neu, es wiederholt die Klage / Des Lebens labyrinthisch irren Lauf..."[23] Edgar Allen Poe envisions God at the center of His labyrinthian creation: "As we find cycle within cycle without end, yet all revolving around one far-distant centre which is the Godhead,... "[24] Likewise Baudelaire, in "Les Phares" describes the macrocosm as a series of diminishing spheres: "Ces malédictions, ces blasphèmes, ces plaintes, / Ces extases, ces cris, ces pleurs, ces Te Deum, / Sont un écho redit par mille labyrinthes;...[25]

A more innovative interpretation of the labyrinth image prevailed during the romantic period. Giovanni Battista Piranesi's "Antiquities of Rome" inspired Coleridge, De Quincey, Nodier, Musset and Baudelaire. One of Piranesi's "Prison" etchings is described by De Quincey.

> Some of these (I describe only from memory of Coleridge's account) represented vast Gothic halls; on the floor of which stood mighty engines and machinery, wheels, cables, catapults, etc., expressive of enormous power put forth, or resistance overcome. Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase; and upon this, groping his way upwards, was Piranesi himself. Follow the stairs a little farther, and you perceive them reaching an abrupt termination, without any balustrade, and allowing no step onwards to him who should reach the extremity, except into the depths below.... But raise your eyes, and behold a second flight of stairs still higher, on which again Piranesi is perceived, by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Once again elevate your eye, and a still more aerial flight of stairs is descried; and there, again, is the delirious Piranesi, busy on his aspiring labours: and so on, until the unfinished stairs and the hopeless Piranesi both are lost in the upper gloom of the hall.[26]

To Nodier, for example, this image strikingly portrays man's futile yet ceaseless exertion to attain a terminal point: "Piranèse monte encore, il monte toujours; il faut qu'il monte toujours, il faut qu'il marche toujours, il faut qu'il arrive toujours."[27] The Piranesi motif where we find spiral within spiral without end has been the subject of two very interesting critical studies: Luzius Keller's Piranèse et les romantiques français: Le mythe des escaliers en spirale and George Poulet's "Piranèse et les poètes romantiques français." The labyrinth symbol is included in their respective studies because it is an analogous concept:

> ... dans l'univers piranésien le thème des escaliers s'ajoute à celui de la spirale. Les études de Kerényi et nos propres observations ont montré cependant que l'univers en spirale et l'univers labyrinthique des escaliers ne font qu'un.[28]

The romantic poets also adopted the image of the spiral that coils inward to symbolize a withdrawal into the self. Alfred de Musset in Confessions d'un enfant du siècle describes this "inward odyssey" thus:

> ... quand la pensée, tournant sur elle-même, s'est épuisée à se creuser, lasse d'un travail inutile, elle s'arrête épouvantée. Il semble que l'homme soit vide, et qu'à force de descendre en lui, il arrive à la dernière marche d'une spirale.[29]

This image of the spiral suggests un "approfondissement du moi."

Another major romantic theme, that of "évasion" is portrayed by a spiral that coils outward. The movement is no longer one of the contraction but of the expansion of the self.

> ... au lieu de la concentricité absolue l'excentricité absolue. C'est transporter l'être, pour toujours, loin du centre obscur, au grand soleil de la surface.[30]

The spiral - labyrinth as image of diffusion and concentration of individual identity is summarized by Baudelaire in his incisive precept: "De la vaporisation et de la centralisation du Moi. Tout est là."[31]

The recurrence of the labyrinth image in modern literature is of more particular interest to our topic. James Joyce, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges and Alain Robbe-Grillet are major representatives of this modern fascination for the image. To poets such as Valéry, Eliot, Lorca and Michaux, the labyrinth is a central metaphor. Hofmannsthal, Gide, Camus, Sabato, Anais Nin, Beckett, Frisch and Cortázar are a few of the many novelists who use the image. Modern philosophers like Nietzsche, Heidegger, Jaspers, Teilhard de Chardin and Merleau-Ponty have concretized their thought by means of the labyrinth.[32] The labyrinth theme has also been exploited in art, music, sculpture. The spiral form and the minotaur myth have inspired painters like Johannes Itten, Carlo Carra, Jean Arp, Salvador Dali, Chirico, Picasso and Klee. In addition, modern dance and architecture is replete with the labyrinthine form.

To confirm the presence of the maze image in modern poetry, a few examples are apposite. Henri Michaux in a poem entitled "Labyrinthe" writes:

> Labyrinthe, la vie, labyrinthe, la mort
> Labyrinthe sans fin, dit le Maître de Ho.
> Tout enfonce, rien ne libère
> Le suicidé renaît à une nouvelle souffrance.
> La prison ouvre sur une prison
> Le couloir ouvre un autre couloir:
> Celui qui croit dérouler le rouleau de sa vie
> Ne déroule rien du tout.
> Rien ne débouche nulle part
> Les siècles aussi vivent sous terre, dit le Maître de Ho.[33]

Paul Valéry in "Ebauche d'un serpent" imagines a tree as a labyrinth.

> Irrésistible Arbre des arbres,...
> Toi qui pousses tels labyrinthes
> Par qui les ténèbres étreintes
> S'iront perdre dans le saphir
> De l'éternelle matinée,[34]

Another poet, T.S. Eliot, often uses the circle or spiral form. In "Gerontion", he perceives the pattern of history as labyrinthine:

> ... Think now
> History has many cunning passages, contrived corridors
> And issues...,[35]

A few modern dramatists have also included the labyrinth as thematic motif or as structural pattern in their works. Maurice Maeterlinck's Alladine et Palomides and Fernando Arrabal's Le

Labyrinthe employ the labyrinth as mythical allusion or as subject for parody. Michel de Ghelderode's Les Aveugles and many of Beckett's and Ionesco's plays like Waiting for Godot and The Chairs may be considered labyrinthine in structure.

Modern novelists have used the Theseus hero, the minotaur myth and the labyrinth image in their works. André Gide's Thésée is a famous example. In his last book, Gide resumed through symbolic figures "la somme de son expérience humaine."[36] After an eventful life dedicated to exterminating monsters, Theseus can legate as testament words of humble satisfaction:

> J'ai goûté des biens de la terre. Il m'est doux de penser qu'après moi, grâce à moi, les hommes se reconnaîtront plus heureux, meilleurs et plus libres. Pour le bien de l'humanité future, j'ai fait mon oeuvre. J'ai vécu.[37]

Critics have suggested that the structure of Les Caves du Vatican and Les Faux-monnayeurs is labyrinthian. Pierre Lafille in André Gide romancier writes: "l'effet esthétique n'est plus une ligne droite mais un labyrinthe."[38]

In the essay "Le Minotaure ou la halte d'Oran", Camus depicts the city as a maze:

> Oran est un grand mur circulaire et jaune, recouvert d'un ciel dur. Au début, on erre dans le labyrinthe, on cherche la mer comme le signe d'Ariane. Mais on tourne en rond dans des rues fauves et oppressantes, et, à la fin, le Minotaure dévore les Oranais: c'est l'ennui.[39]

The Dantean circular streets in La Chute have been compared to the corridors and rooms of Kafka's The Trial:

> Les cercles concentriques et la chambre-malconfort d'Amsterdam sont souvent vus du même oeil que les labyrinthes de couloirs et les chambres étouffantes de la ville du Procès.[40]

In the poems "Through the Streets of My Own Labyrinth", "The Labyrinth" and the novelette "The Voice" in Winter of Artifice, Anaïs Nin has utilized the maze symbol. In her book on literary criticism, The Novel of the Future, she discloses the relevancy of this image in her writing.

> The concept of the labyrinth attracted me. It represented, first of all, mystery. One was lost in a maze. The unconscious is a maze. One does not know with the conscious mind, clearly, where one is going. There are many detours.... The mind is a labyrinth.... It became one of my favorite images.... [41]

A dream structured on the "Piranesi effect" is described by Anaïs Nin in "The Voice":

> The dream was composed like a tower of layers without end, rising upward and losing themselves in the infinite, or layers coiling downward, losing themselves in the bowels of the earth. When it swooped me into its undulations, the spiraling began, and this spiral was a labyrinth. There was no vault and no bottom, no walls and no return.[42]

Samuel Beckett's novels are outstanding examples of variations on the theme of "l'homme égaré" in a labyrinth whose quest spirals ultimately toward complete immobility. On the one hand, Molloy, lost in a forest and island labyrinth, continually endeavors to discover an exit.

> Et alors, me tournant avec méthode vers les allées qui en rayonnaient,... je faisais un tour complet sur moi-même, ou moins d'un tour, ou plus d'un tour, tellement ces allées se ressemblaient entre elles.[43]

On the other hand, in L'Innommable, the hero, aware of the futility of circular wanderings, prefers transfixion at the center of the labyrinth.

> Tout est possible, ou presque. Mais le plus simple vraiment est de me considérer comme fixe et au centre de cet endroit, quelles qu'en soient la forme et

> l'étendue.[44]

According to Frederick Karl, the labyrinth enclosure reaches its "twentieth century apotheosis in Beckett."[45]

In his autobiography Speak, Memory, Vladimir Nabokov explains the function of the spiral image in his works:

> The spiral is a spiritualized circle. In the spiral form, the circle, uncoiled, unwound, has ceased to be vicious; it has been set free. I thought this up when I was a schoolboy, and I also discovered that Hegel's triadic series expressed merely the essential spirality of all things in their relation to time. Twirl follows twirl, and every synthesis is the thesis of the next series....
> A coloured spiral in a small ball of glass, this is how I see my own life.[46]

In the realm of Nathalie Sarraute's "conversations sous-conversations", the labyrinth image is associated with a voyage to the interior. From her point of view, the monster at the center is another person's consciousness. Le Planétarium illustrates this:

> Dehors le peuple anxieux attend. Je suis seul dans l'antre redoutable,... J'avance en tremblant à travers un dédale sombre.... C'est là, la porte va s'entrouvrir, je vais m'approcher, le monstre sera capturé, ligoté, conduit en laisse...[47]

The "nouveau roman" often uses the labyrinth as structure and image. Some examples are Claude Ollier's La Mise en scène, Robert Pinget's L'Inquisitoire and Graal Flibuste and Claude Simon's Le Palace and La Route des Flandres. Representative of these authors, Claude Simon, in the latter novel, relates how his protagonist is trapped:

> ... je savais ... qu'il n'y avait pas d'autre issue et qu'à la fin nous serions pris: tout cela ne menait à rien pourtant ... j'ai essayé continué ... errant tournant en rond dans ces chemins entre ces haies toutes pareilles à celle derrière laquelle s'était embusquée sa mort.[48]

The labyrinth is a frequent and explicit metaphor in the works of Michel Butor. In L'Emploi du temps, Revel remarks: "... pour moi désormais Ariane représentait Ann Bailey, que Phèdre représentait Rose, que j'étais moi-même Thésée,..."[49] As Theseus, he tries to decipher the plan of his itinerary drawn in his diary:

> ... ce cordon de phrases est un fil d'Ariane parce que je suis dans un labyrinthe, parce que j'écris pour m'y retrouver, toutes ces lignes étant les marques dont je jalonne les trajets déjà reconnus, le labyrinthe de mes jours à Bleston, incomparablement plus déroutant que le palais de Crète, puisqu'il s'augmente à mesure que je le parcoure, puisqu'il se déforme à mesure que je l'explore.[50]

The author as a giver of clues, and the book itself as a representation of the labyrinth are central themes in Butor's critical essays and novels. In an interview with Georges Charbonnier, Butor said: "... le livre entier est un labyrinthe à l'intérieur du temps, le fil des phrases jouant le rôle de fil d'Ariane."[51]The labyrinth as a descent into hell is perceptible in La Modification, Degrés, and Passage de Milan.

The spiral form and the labyrinth myth are also important and prevalent in modern art. Georges Matoré in L'Espace humain: l'expression de l'espace dans la vie, la pensée et l'art contemporains recognizes the similarity of the tradition in art as well as in literature: "le thème [du labyrinthe] est en effet fréquent, notamment depuis Kafka, dans les lettres, il a été aussi exploité par les peintres: qu'on pense par exemple à Klee."[52] Excellent examples of the labyrinth motif in Klee are the paintings: "Die scene mit der Laufenden" (1925) and "Germination pathétique" (1939). Apart from the labyrinth structure, the minotaur myth has inspired modern art.

Picasso painted a series of Minotaur drawings, for example, "Minotauromachy" (1935), Salvador Dali "Teseo e il Minotauro," Jean Arp "Il Minotauro Diavolo," and Michael Ayrton "The Maze-Maker." In music, Peter Schat has written the "Five Dances of the Labyrinth."

Indeed, the labyrinth has become a useful image. Two recent history books on Mexico and Spain include the concept of the labyrinth as the titles suggest: Octavio Paz, *The Labyrinth of Solitude: Life and Thought in Mexico* and Gerald Brenan, *The Spanish Labyrinth*.

> ... on se sert du labyrinthe pour nous aider à comprendre le peuple mexicain, le peuple espagnol, comme hier il servait à Kafka, à Joyce,... Le labyrinthe est devenu la banale- parce que la meilleure- traduction de la posture dérisoire d'un individu que le monde engloutit et déroute.[53]

In retrospect, we may adduce that the twentieth century is clearly an epoch which employs the labyrinth in numerous and variant ways. Modern art, music, architecture, and literature have rediscovered this figuration.[54]

> [Une image qui] fleurit dans la conscience moderne[est celle] du labyrinthe. L'Homme est un labyrinthe vivant, perdu dans la recherche de soi.... Il n'est besoin que d'évoquer les oeuvres de Matta ou de Léger qui plastiquement, figurent ainsi leur angoisse, ou de nommer Kafka, J.L. Borgès, ou encore A. Robbe-Grillet, pour constater la permanence et l'ancrage de cette image dans la conscience moderne.[55]

NOTES

[1] *The History of Herodotus*, 2, 148, ed. Ernest Rhys (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1940), p. 191.

[2] *Natural History*, 36, 19, trans. D. E. Eichholz (London: William Heinemann, 1962), p. 67.

[3] Charles Dugas, "L'Evolution de la légende de Thésée," *Revue des Etudes Grecques*, 56 (1943). His method is: "d'esquisser l'histoire de Thésée en prenant comme fil conducteur l'imagerie des vases... la documentation céramique;..." p. 2. He concludes his research thus: "rien ne précise que la lutte avec le Minotaure a eu lieu dans le labyrinthe même et qu'il vient d'abattre le monstre."p.14. All aspects of the labyrinth myth may be found in H.J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Mythology including its extension to Rome* (London: Methuen, 1958), pp. 183, 265.

[4] *Iliad*, trans. Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 391.

[5] See *The Fragments of Sophocles*, ed. A.C. Pearson, vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1917), pp. 110-14.

[6] *The Aeneid*, trans. Frank O. Copley (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), p. 107.

[7] *The Metamorphoses*, trans. Horace Gregory (New York: Viking Press, 1958), p. 220.

[8] *The Library*, trans. Sir James George Frazer (London: William Heinemann, 1921), p. 305.

[9] *Plutarch's Lives*, trans. Bernadotte Perrin, vol. 1 (London: William Heinemann, 1914), pp. 1-87.

[10] *The Poems of Catullus*, trans. Peter Whigham (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1969), p. 145.

[11] Marcel Brion, "Le Thème de l'entrelacs et du labyrinthe dans l'oeuvre de Léonard de Vinci," *Revue d'Esthétique*, 5, No. 1 (janv.-mars 1952), 27.

[12] Robert Mallet, *Jardins et paradis* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959). See Paolo Santarcangeli, *Il Libro dei labirinti: Storia di un mito e di un simbolo* (Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1967), p. 253.

[13] *Inferno*, 12, 7-13, trans. John D. Sinclair (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), p. 155.

[14] H.L.C. Jaffé, "Les Labyrinthes," *Situationist Times*, 4 (1963), 23.

[15] *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart*, trans. Count Lutzow (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1901), pp. 61-2.

[16] *The Breaking of the Circle: Studies in the Effect of the "New Science" upon Seventeenth-Century Poetry* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1960), p. 7.

[17] Gustav René Hocke, *Labyrinthe de l'art fantastique: Le maniérisme dans l'art européen*, trans. Cornélius Heim (Paris: Gonthier, 1967), p. 109.

[18] Wylie Sypher, *Four Stages of Renaissance Style: Transformations in Art and Literature 1400- 1700* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1955), p. 9.

[19] *Pensées* (Paris: Nouveaux Classiques Larousse, 1965), p. 107. (No. 198 Brunschvicg ed. No. 693)

[20] *Addison: The Miscellaneous Works*, ed. A.C. Guthkelch, vol. 1 (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1914), p. 356.

[21] George Herbert's poem may be found in Roy Daniells, "In the Labyrinth: A Note on Franz Kafka," *Manitoba Arts Review*, 3 (Spring 1942), 11.

[22] *Alexander Pope: Selected Poetry and Prose*, ed. William K. Wimsatt (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. 194.

[23] *Faust*, ed. W.H. Bruford (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 3.

[24] "The Island of the Fay," *Selected Poetry and Prose of Poe*, ed. T.O. Mabbott (New York: The Modern Library, 1951), p. 194.

[25] *Les Fleurs du mal* (Paris: Garnier, 1961), p. 16.

[26] "Confessions of an English Opium-Eater," *The Collected Writings*, ed. David Masson, vol. 3 (London: A. and C. Black, 1897), p. 439.

[27] "Piranèse," *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. 11 (Genève: Slatkine reprints, 1968), p. 192.

[28] Luzius Keller, *Piranèse et les romantiques français: le mythe des escaliers en spirale* (Paris: José Corti, 1966), p. 249.

[29] Alfred de Musset, *Oeuvres complètes en prose* (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), p. 269.

[30] Georges Poulet, *Les Métamorphoses du cercle* (Paris: Plon, 1961), p. 158.

[31] "Mon coeur mis à nu," *Oeuvres complètes*, eds. Y.G. Le Dantec and Claude Pichois (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), p. 1271.

[32] See Henri Ronse, "Le Labyrinthe, espace significatif," *Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme*, 9-10 (1965-1966), 28-9 and Georges Matoré, *L'Espace humain: l'expression de l'espace dans la vie, la pensée et l'art contemporains* (Paris: La Colombe, 1962).

[33] *Epreuves, Exorcismes 1940-1944* (Paris: Gallimard, 1945), pp. 66-7.

[34] *Oeuvres I*, ed. Jean Hytier (Paris: Gallimard, 1957), p. 145.

[35] *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 40.

[36] Jacqueline de Romilly, et al., "Les Mythes antiques dans la littérature contemporaine," *Bulletin de l'Association Guillaume Budé*, 2 (juin 1960), 178.

[37] *Thésée* (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 123.

[38] *André Gide romancier* (Paris: Hachette, 1954), p. 204.

[39] "Le Minotaure ou la halte d'Oran," *Essais*, eds. Roger Quilliot and Louis Faucon (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 818.

[40] Mary Ann Frese Witt, "Camus et Kafka," *La Revue des lettres modernes*, 4, No. 264-70 (1971), 84.

[41] *The Novel of the Future* (London: Peter Owen, 1968), pp. 42-3.

[42] *Winter of Artifice: Three Novelettes* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1945), p. 170. The phrase "Piranesi effect" is from J. Hillis Miller, "Thomas de Quincey," *The Disappearance of God. Five Nineteenth-Century Writers* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard Univ. Press, 1963).

[43] Samuel Beckett, *Molloy* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1951), p. 127.

[44] *L'Innommable* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1953), p. 16.

[45] "Enclosure, The Adversary Culture, and the Nature of the Novel," *Mosaic*, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1974), 12.

[46] *Speak, Memory: A Memoir* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1951), p. 203.

[47] *Le Planétarium* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), pp. 157-8.

[48] *La Route des Flandres* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1960), p. 77.

[49] *L'Emploi du temps* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1957), p. 173.

[50] Ibid., p. 187.

[51] *Entretiens avec Michel Butor* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), pp. 98-9. Concerning *L'Emploi du temps*, Butor said: "C'est d'ailleurs pourquoi le thème du labyrinthe est si important dans ce livre, non seulement labyrinthe dans l'espace (le labyrinthe classique, le labyrinthe de Crète construit par Dédale...), mais labyrinthe dans le temps;" p. 98.

[52] Matoré, p. 165.

[53] Ludovic Janvier, *Une Parole exigeante: le Nouveau roman* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1964), p. 28.

[54] We regret, that in this brief survey of the tradition of the labyrinth image, important examples were omitted. The setting of most Gothic novels are interesting labyrinth constructs, for example, eerie medieval castles with dungeons, subteranean passages, secret doors and vaults. These locales may be found in such popular Gothic novels as: Horace Walpole, *Castle of Otranto, a Gothic Story* (1764); William Beckford, *Vathek* (1786); Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794); Matthew Gregory Lewis, *The Monk* (1797); and Charles B. Brown, *Arthur Mervin; Or Memoirs of the Year 1793*; and Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher." These labyrinthine settings could also be seen in novels like *Pamela*, *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *Great Expectations*. Here men or women are trapped and victimized. Since our tradition chapter attempted to include only literary works, we did not discuss the important turf or garden mazes which were prolific from the 15th to the 17th century. For an excellent summary of this topic see W.H. Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths: A General Account of their History and Developments* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1922).

[55] Anne-Marie Amiot, "*La Chute*, ou, de la prison au labyrinthe," *Annales de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de Nice*, 2, No. 4 (1967), 129-30.

CHAPTER II

JAMES JOYCE

In our discussion of Joyce, we begin with a brief outline of the labyrinth image as it is used in Stephen Hero, Ulysses and Finnegans Wake. Our study of A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man concentrates first on the wanderer in the labyrinth. The parallel themes of Stephen as prisoner and initiate in the labyrinth are analyzed. Stephen's confrontation with the minotaur and subsequent flight from the maze follows. In conclusion, the novel itself as a construction based on the labyrinth design is presented.

In Stephen Hero, the labyrinth image is not clearly delineated. Although the image is not explicit in this work, it is implicit in the hero's wanderings in Dublin. Albert Gérard remarks: "Le Dedalus de Stephen Hero, plus proche de l'autobiographie intérieure, est un jeune homme qui cherche son chemin dans le labyrinthe de l'existence."[1] The central action of the novel consists of wanderings and peripatetic discussions. Stephen "wandered through the slums," "through the maze of poor streets," and even "trudged to the Bull every day."[2] During these "aimless solitary walks," Stephen "forged out his sentences."[3] Stephen explains that if someone could decipher the plan of his wanderings, he would understand his art:

> If you were an esthetic philosopher you would take note of all my vagaries because here you have the spectacle of the esthetic instinct in action. The philosophic college should spare a detective for me.[4]

The major distinction between Stephen Hero and Portrait of the Artist appears in the organization of the novel and the forceful presentation of ideas through images. Stephen, in the first novel, states that the "supreme artist's" task is to "disentangle the subtle soul of the image from its mesh of defining circumstances most exactly and 're-embody' it in artistic circumstances chosen as the most exact for it in its new office...."[5] The concept of epiphanies is another essential idea in this story. These moments of transcendence may or may not be an exit from the labyrinth.[6]

A few direct allusions to the Daedalus myth occur in Ulysses. In the 'Circe' episode, Stephen - Icarius recalls one of his father's inventions: "Remember Pasiphae for whose lust my grandoldgrossfather made the first confessionbox."[7] Another reference to the myth concerns itself with Stephen as a fallen Icarius:

> Fabulous artificer, the hawklike man. You flew. Whereto? Newhaven-Dieppe, steerage passenger. Paris and back. Lapwing. Icarus. Pater, ait. Seabedabbled, fallen, weltering. Lapwing you are. Lapwing he.[8]

The symbol for the "Wandering Rocks" chapter is the labyrinth. Joyce intended this chapter to be the center of his novel. Stuart Gilbert underlines how "in its structure and its technic ('labyrinth') this episode may be regarded as a small-scale model of Ulysses as a whole."[9] Therefore, the labyrinth is both Dublin and the novel.

Concerning the novel as a labyrinth, stylistic techniques enhance its maze design. Stanford describes how Bloom's stream of thoughts interlace to form an intricate pattern:

> From chapter to chapter the various thoughts, actions, and sensations of Bloom's minute-by-minute experiences are interwoven, loop by loop, spiral by spiral... into a complex, variegated unity of design.[10]

Indeed, Joyce found a resemblance between his art and The Book of Kells:

> It is the most purely Irish thing we have, and some of the big initial letters which swing right across a page have the essential quality of a chapter of Ulysses. ...you can compare much of my work to the intricate illuminations.[11]

Finnegans Wake can also be seen in terms of a labyrinth - spiral. Umberto Eco described it as "un enchevêtrement de figures abstraites en forme de spirales, qui ignorent volontairement la régularité géométrique et la symétrie...."[12] In fact, the labyrinth is so integral to Joyce's thought and art that Brancusi made use of spiral forms to paint his famous portrait of Joyce.

From one point of view, Stephen in Portrait of the Artist is a prisoner in a closed labyrinth. From another point of view, he is the initiate in an open labyrinth. These two interpretations co-exist and develop simultaneously throughout the novel.

At first Stephen is confined in the "corridors" of his school and in the "maze of streets". Later, this entrapment extends to include his family, his religion, and his nation.

Although at first a place of refuge for Stephen against his more robust companions, Clongowes Wood soon becomes a prison. For example, as Stephen proceeds in its "low, dark, narrow" corridors in order to see the rector, they become an enclosure which he fears and which he seeks to escape: "the labyrinth, ... becomes increasingly odious and threatening; the shelter becomes a trap."[13]

> again in the low narrow dark corridor he began to walk faster and faster. Faster and faster he hurried on through the gloom excitedly. He bumped his elbow against the door at the end and, hurrying down the staircase, walked quickly through the two corridors and out into the air.[14]

Larger circumscribed areas, the country roads and the city streets of Dublin predominate as labyrinths in the second and third chapters. Initially Stephen wanders close to his home: "in the beginning he contented himself with circling timidly round the neighbouring square." (p. 66) Further circular peregrinations are observed in the roads that lead to the custom house: "... he looked on the quays and on the river and on the lowering skies and yet he continued to wander up and down day after day as if he really sought someone that eluded him." (p. 66) Later, his meandering journeys broaden to include the "dark, slimy streets" of the city. (p. 99) Stephen "would follow a devious course up and down the streets, circling always nearer and nearer in a tremor of fear and joy, until his feet led him suddenly round a dark corner." (p. 102)

In these circuitous ambulations, Stephen resembles Ovid's Daedalus: "... ita Daedalus implet/ innumeras errore vias; vixque ipse reverti/ ad limen potuit: tanta est fallacia tecti..."(ll. 166-8)[15] It is interesting to note that the word "errore" means both to wander and to be deceived. This twofold definition of "errore" is very applicable to Stephen who "wander[s] into a maze of narrow and dirty streets," (p.100) and whose "soul go[es] forth to experience, unfolding itself sin by sin." (p. 103)

Hell is a labyrinth figuration which Stephen fears during the retreat sermons. This prison is boundless and without exit: "... l'enfer, ce sera le Labyrinthe, mais fermé sur lui-même, toute issue murée...."[16] Although hell is a closed labyrinth, its expanse is infinite. These concepts of imprisonment and of vastness are utilized by the preacher in his description of the "prisonhouse":

> Hell is a strait and dark and foulsmelling prison.... In earthly prisons the poor captive has at least some liberty of movement were it only within the four walls of his cell or in the gloomy yard of his prison. Not so in hell.... the prisoners are heaped together in their awful prison, the walls of which are said to be four thousand miles thick: and the damned are so utterly bound and helpless.... (p. 119)

Hence, hell as a labyrinth is "... un espace concentrationnaire, qui étrangle l'homme." 17

After this retreat, Stephen's wanderings in the streets of Dublin lead him to the confession box, another labyrinth enclosure. Stephen's acceptance of religion as an issue from the sinful life he led is unpropitious. Religion as a prison without escape is suggested by the cage image formed by the priest's hands:

> The preacher began to speak in a quiet friendly tone. His face was kind and he joined gently the fingers of each hand, forming a frail cage by the union of their tips. (p. 127)

At Belvedere, Stephen is approached by a priest in order to discuss his vocation. The image of the skull, noose and blind cord again intimate that religion entraps: "the priest let the blindcord fall to one side and, uniting his hands, leaned his chin gravely upon them,..." (p. 157)

In the same manner as the image of the cage depicts religion as a prison, the image of the nets suggests the nation as a place of captivity. Stephen escapes from one labyrinth to enter another enclosure. In the end, he hopes to overcome all these labyrinths within labyrinths, his surroundings, his religion, and his nation:

> When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. (p. 203)

Within these prison, cage and net enclosures, spiral or labyrinthine movements trace a pattern comparable in intricacy to Stephen's circular wanderings in Dublin. A few of these outstanding coil and spiral images should be noticed. When Stephen imagines the fiends in hell, he sees them as: "swish[ing] in slow circles round and round the field, winding hither and thither through the weeds,... They moved in slow circles, circling closer and closer to enclose, to enclose,..." (p. 138) Coiling motion is also observable in the city: "the city was spinning about herself a soft cocoon of yellowish haze,..." (p. 138) During Stephen's devotional period, "he drove his soul daily through an increasing circle of works of supererogation....Every part of his day,... circled about its own centre of spiritual energy." (p. 147-8) The "form of the ellipsoid" is evoked in the professor's discourse on "elliptical billiard balls." (p. 192) Apart from his topic, his own voice is labyrinthine:

> The droning voice of the professor continued to wind itself slowly round and round the coils it spoke of, doubling, trebling, quadrupling its somnolent energy as the coil multiplied its ohms of resistance. (p. 194)

This spiral image is also expressed in Stephen's idea of a writer and his impersonal art work: "the personality of the artist passes into the narration itself, flowing round and round the persons and the action like a vital sea." (p. 215)

The infinite rotations in space of the astral bodies may be interpreted as another variation of spiral trajectories within a prison: "... the vast cyclic movement of the earth,..." (p. 172) "the vast cycle of starry life bore his weary mind outward to its verge and inward to its centre,..."(p. 103) and "drifting amid life like the barren shell of the moon." (p. 96)

Stephen is both a prisoner and an initiate. Our study has first concentrated on the closed labyrinth and its related configurations. Let us now turn to the open labyrinth and its associated constructs.

Stephen undergoes a sequence of successive initiations.[18] This pattern of deaths and rebirths has been extensively studied by Fortuna. Her analysis is based on the major distinctions of the labyrinth ceremony as designated by Frazer, Van Gennep and Harrison: lustral ceremonies, ritual marriage, ritual dance, sacrificial death and ritual rebirth.

> A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man is essentially a mythic novel .... No novel has ever wound itself through so many repetitions of prior incidents, so many recapitulations of terms associated with winding corridors, threads and mazes, so many deliberate passages in which the protagonist seems to be involved in an intricate initiation that includes caves, gates, circling dances, nets, divination, auguries, ritual birth, death, and rebirth, riddles, hidings, escapes and finally ascension.[19]

One prominent example of an open labyrinth figuration is the threshold. Its function in the initiatory rite is elucidated by Schnapper: "the labyrinth pattern... represents... a threshold or gate over or through which man must pass if he wants to gain the renewal of life, awaiting him the other side."[20] A few examples of these threshold images are apposite. When Stephen decides to see the rector, he "crossed the threshold of the door of the corridor." (p. 55) Later, when he envisions the fiends of hell:

> He waited in fear, his soul pining within him, praying silently that death might not touch his brow as he passed over the threshold, that the fiends that inhabit darkness might not be given power over him. He waited still at the threshold as at the entrance to some dark cave. Faces were there; eyes: they waited and watched. (p. 136)

Stephen crosses other thresholds, those of his home and his college. (p. 139, 160) Art is yet another threshold for Stephen: "... from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul an image of the beauty we have come to understand - that is art." (p. 207) At his moment of dedication to art, all the gates of experiences in life open:

> To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life! A wild angel had appeared to him, ... to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on and on! (p. 172)

Other figurations of the open labyrinth are the caves, the caverns, the catacombs, the tunnels, the ditches, the cloisters, the graves and the temples. Hell may also be interpreted as an initiation loci.[21] As illustrative examples of these images, we may first take cognizance of the passage where Stephen listens to an old woman's tales:

> He sat listening to the words and following the ways of adventure that lay open in the coals, arches and vaults and winding galleries and jagged caverns. (p. 68)

The tunnel, another image, exemplifies the repetitious and endless nature of school years:

> First came the vacation and then the next term and then vacation again and then again another term and then again the vacation. It was like a train going in and out of tunnels and that was like the noise of the boys eating .... Term, vacation; tunnel, out; noise, stop. (p. 17)

A third image, the square ditch, where Stephen is thrown, is a place of lustration rites:[22]

> That was mean of Wells to shoulder him into the square ditch .... How cold and slimy the water had been! A fellow had once seen a big rat jump into the scum. ... The cold slime of the ditch covered his whole body; ... he felt the cold air of the corridor and staircase inside his clothes. (p. 10, 14)

Lastly, more immediate places of sacrificial rituals like temples and catacombs suggest the mythic and Christian elements interlaced in the novel. On the one hand, Stephen "seemed more than ever a humble server making ready the place of sacrifice in an empty temple, a levite of the Lord." (p. 185) On the other hand, he "imagined that he was kneeling at mass in the catacombs." (p. 147) These double motifs are underlined by Stephen himself when he reveals that: "in vague sacrificial or sacramental acts alone his will seemed drawn to go forth to encounter reality." (p. 159)

In the tradition of the labyrinth, there is always a monster at the center. Since there are many figurations of the labyrinth in Portrait of the Artist, there are many monsters. Stephen must pass through a succession of labyrinths and he must confront many minotaurs. The critic Hayman has explicated this point. He believes that the minotaurs are mainly found at the end of each chapter and that each encounter with a monster is an escape from one labyrinth but an entrance into another: "... the climax of each chapter leads Stephen to enter a new maze: the rector of Clongowes, the tender harlot, the gentle old Capuchin, the bird-girl, and Stephen's unrealistic vision of his artistic destiny."[23] In general, we agree with Hayman's view. However, it must be conceded that monster images are predominant throughout the novel and not only at the end of each chapter. Our method will be to study Joyce's vocabulary and perceive how he utilizes words which connote the bestial and the monstrous. These terms are usually associated not with the rector of Clongowes or the other figures named above by Hayman, but they describe Stephen himself.

Stephen's recognition of the monstrosity of his body is the dominant minotaur image in the novel. This minotaur within is one of the levels of interpretation of the original myth. As Brion states:

> Le mythe du labyrinthe de Crète nous montre Thésée affrontant le Minotaure et le tuant. Il est aisé de dégager le sens de cette lutte dans les ténèbres, puisqu'elle aboutit à la victoire de l'homme ... l'hybride composé d'homme et de bête, représentant tout ce côté animal que l'homme doit tuer en lui-même pour parvenir à la sagesse, à la connaissance, en un mot à la béatitude des héros. ... La victoire de Thésée sur le Minotaure, c'est la victoire de Thésée sur lui-même.[24]

Stephen's descent into a sinful existence is portrayed by appropriate images of bestiality. In his ambulations through Dublin, "he moaned to himself like some baffled prowling beast." (p. 99) In accord with Stephen's lustful desires, he succumbs to "monstrous reveries" and "monstrous images," and "by his monstrous way of life he seemed to have put himself beyond the limits of reality." (p. 90, 92) Stephen's metamorphosis is further demonstrated in his manner of eating:

> He ate his dinner with surly appetite... he rose and went to the window, clearing the thick scum from his mouth with his tongue and licking it from his lips. So he had sunk to the state of a beast that licks his chaps after meat.... (p. 111)

Finally, Stephen's soul becomes imprisoned at the center of his monstrous ways:

> His soul was fattening and congealing into a gross grease, plunging ever deeper in its dull fear into a sombre threatening dusk, while the body that was his stood, listless and dishonoured, gazing out of darkened eyes, helpless, perturbed and human for a bovine god to stare upon. (p. 111)[25]

He reflects on this antithesis between his monstrous body and his soul thus:

> Who made it to be like that, a bestial part of the body able to understand bestially and desire bestially? ... His soul

> sickened at the thought of a torpid snaky life feeding itself out of the tender marrow of his life and fattening upon the slime of lust. (pp. 139-40)

Stephen concludes emphatically: "You mean I am a monster," "... we are all animals. I also am an animal." (p. 203, 206)

An important allusion to the minotaur may also be recognized in Stephen's name. His friends call him both "Bous Stephanoumenos!" and "Bous Stephaneforos!" which allude to the labyrinth myth where the bull is a sacrificial victim."Bous is the Greek word for bull, bullock, etc. ... The bull is, of course, one of the archetypal cultural, religious, and mythological symbols; .... the bull has been the victim of various types of ritual sacrifice."[26]

A few other incidental monster images should be presented. A reference to the minotaur myth adapted to a child's credence is seen at the very beginning of the novel:[27]

> Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo.... (p. 7)

While discussing his aesthetic theory, Stephen clarifies his argument thus: "if a man hacking in fury at a block of wood, ... make there an image of a cow..." (p. 214) This is a reminder of Daedalus' invention constructed for Pasiphae. It is also interesting to note that when Stephen "set off abruptly for the Bull," he encounters the bird-girl and dedicates himself to art. (p. 164)[28]

Apart from the minotaurs within the labyrinth constructs, another image is inherent to the original Cretan myth.

> The two principal images of the Daedalus myth are the two great inventions of the artificer: the labyrinth, which has

> at its center the male monster or Minotaur ... and the wings, which are intimately connected through Icarus with both the sun and the sea.[29]

We will now study the image of wings and birds related to Stephen's subsequent flight from the labyrinth. These images, however, do not always indicate a forthcoming escape.

Stephen's first flight occurs when he is elevated into the air by his classmates. They "closed round him in a ring" and formed a "cradle of their locked hands and hoisted him up among them and carried him along till he struggled to get free." (p. 58) Primarily, the image of wings and of flight are incarnate in Stephen Dadelus' name. They are symbols of artifacts devised by man in order to flee from the labyrinth. Stephen identifies with his namesake:

> Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and slowly climbing the air .... a hawklike man flying sunward above the sea,... a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workshop out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable imperishable being?... His heart trembled in an ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight .... An ecstasy of flight made radiant.... His throat ached with a desire to cry aloud, the cry of a hawk or eagle on high, to cry piercingly of his deliverance to the winds. This was the call of life to his soul ... (p. 169)

With respect to Stephen's emulation of his famous ancestor, Tindall writes: "Stephen follows, however parochially, his famous namesake, becoming according to his capacity, artist, craftsman, inventor, victim, flier, and exile,..."[30] Ultimately, in order to escape the imprisonment of religion, education, language and nationality, Stephen resembles:

> ... the hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings, of Thoth, the god of writers, writing with a reed upon a tablet and bearing on his narrow ibis head the cusped moon. (p. 225)[31]

By way of conclusion, the novel as a labyrinth should be given particular attention. Portrait of the Artist is designed on the pattern of the labyrinth. The five chapters reiterate one another. This coil - spiral pattern reflects Stephen's journey through a succession of prison and initiation labyrinths. Three important critics have analyzed this aspect of the novel. This labyrinthine structure interests Wayne C. Booth. He questions the function of repetitious chapters which climax in epiphanic moments:

> For a transformation, or for a merely cyclical return? Is the final exaltation a release from the depressing features of Irish life which have tainted the earlier experiences? Or is it the fifth turn in an endless cycle?[32]

However, Kenner in "The Portrait in Perspective" does not remain in the realm of conjecture. He asserts that although the chapters repeat themselves, they really designate Stephen's circular movement or journey from a lesser to a greater horizon:

> This precise analogical structure suggests that the action of each of the five chapters is really the same action. ... Each successive attempt represents on the psychological level a maturer level of comprehensive organization; an assault on life armed with successively larger and larger visions of the meaning of his own existence.[33]

It is, furthermore, Dorothy Van Ghent's contention that Stephen's circular wanderings parallel the novel's concentric structure:

> Through the book he moves from one geographical and spiritual orbit to another, "walking" in lengthening radius until he is ready to take up flight.[34]

In view of Joyce's figurations of the labyrinth in the novel and the labyrinth pattern of the novel, Borges, in a poem "Invocación a Joyce," writes:

> Tú, mientras tanto,
> en las ciudades del destierro,

en aquel destierro que fue
tu aborrecido y elegido instrumento,
el arma de tu arte,
erigías tus arduos laberintos,
infinitesimales e infinitos,
admirablemente mezquinos,
más populosos que la historia.[35]

NOTES

[1] "Le Dédale de James Joyce," *La Revue nouvelle*, 27 (1958), 498.

[2] *Stephen Hero*, ed. John J. Slocum and Herbert Cahoon (New York: New Directions, 1955), pp. 145, 146, 151.

[3] Ibid., p. 69.

[4] Ibid., p. 186.

[5] Ibid., p. 78.

[6] One critic who finds that the epiphany is not an exit from the labyrinth is Robert Scholes, "Joyce and the Epiphany: The Key to the Labyrinth?" *Sewanee Review*, 72, No. 1 (Winter 1964), 65-77. An opposing view is found in Jean Paris, *James Joyce par lui-même* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1961).

[7] *Ulysses* (London: Bodley Head, 1960), p. 672.

[8] Ibid., p. 270.

[9] *James Joyce's Ulysses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1952), p. 225. An interesting comparative study of *Ulysses* and Cortázar's *Rayuela* can be found in Chapter II of: Lida Aronne Amestoy, *Cortázar: La Novela mandala* (Buenos Aires:Fernando García Cambeiro, 1972), pp. 21-31. His plan is: "Un paralelo a nivel temático entre el *Ulysses* de James Joyce y *Rayuela* de Julio Cortázar puede funcionar a modo de introducción a la Odisea del hombre hoy- ...." p. 20.

[10] "The Re-Integrated Hero," *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), pp. 223-4.

[11] Arthur Power, *From the Old Waterford House* (London: Mellifont Press, n.d.), p. 67. See Joseph Prescott, "Local Allusions in Joyce's *Ulysses*," *PMLA*, 68 (1953), 1223.

[12] *L'Oeuvre ouverte*, trans. C. Roux de Bézieux (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1965), pp. 279-80.

[13] David Hayman, "Daedalian Imagery in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," *Hereditas: Seven Essays on the Modern Experience of the Classical*, ed. Frederic Will (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1964), pp. 37-8.

[14] *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Chester G. Anderson and Richard Ellmann (New York: Viking Press, 1964), p. 58. Subsequent quotations from *Portrait of the Artist* are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[15] John Frederick Nims, "Dedalus in Crete," *Dedalus on Crete: Essays on the Implication of Joyce's 'Portrait'*, ed. Joseph Feehan (Los Angeles: Saint Thomas More Guild Immaculate Heart College, 1956), p. 78. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Bk. V111, ed. A.S. Hollis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 6.

[16] Paris, *James Joyce par lui-même*, p. 114.

[17] Henri Ronse, "Le Labyrinthe, espace significatif," *Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme*, 9-10 (1965-1966), 35.

[18] W.F. Jackson Knight, *Cumaean Gates: A Reference of the Sixth Aeneid to the Initiation Pattern* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1936), p. 162. This critic distinguishes two types of initiations: the greater initiations which involve death and rebirth, and the lesser initiations where one is purged from sin. These two types are combined in Joyce's novel.

[19] "The Labyrinth of Art: Myth and Ritual in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," Diss. Johns Hopkins Univ., 1967, p. 1. It is this critic's contention that Joyce was inspired in his use of the labyrinth myth by the archeological discoveries of Evans on the Palace of Minos at the beginning of this century.

[20] "The Labyrinth," *The Inward Odyssey: The Concept of 'The Way' in the Great Religions of the World* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965), p. 36.

[21] Knight, *Cumaean Gates: A Reference of the Sixth Aeneid to the Initiation Pattern*, pp. 133 ff.

[22] Jane Ellen Harrison, "Orphic Mysteries," *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1908), pp. 478-571.

[23] Hayman, "Daedalian Imagery in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," p. 42.

[24] "Le Thème de l'entrelacs et du labyrinthe dans l'oeuvre de Leonard de Vinci," *Revue d'Esthétique*, 5, No. 1 (janv.-mars 1952), 26.

[25] This allusion to the "bovine god" is found in Chapter 3, the center of the novel. Fortuna interprets this as the minotaur at the center

of the entire novel, which may be considered the most encompassing labyrinth. See Fortuna, "The Labyrinth of Art: Myth and Ritual in James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man."

[26] E. Bernhardt-Kabisch, "Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," Explicator, 18, No. 4 (Jan. 1960), Item 24.

[27] Herbert Marshall McLuhan, "Joyce, Aquinas, and the Poetic Process," Renascence, 4, No. 1 (Autumn 1951), 9. "The opening words place the hero in the traditional labyrinth and confront him with a minotaur adapted to his infant years."

[28] Stephen's friends, Lynch and Dixon, are also described as monsters. A reference to the bull is seen in the title of Cranly's book: Diseases of the Ox. Obvious minotaurs are the fiends of hell. In Joyce's descriptions of these monsters, he was influenced by d'Annunzio's novel Il Fuoco. See The Workshop of Daedalus: James Joyce and the Raw Materials for A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, ed. Robert Scholes and Richard M. Kain (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1965),pp. 274-9.

[29] Hayman, "Daedalian Imagery in A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," p. 37.

[30] A Reader's Guide to James Joyce (New York: Farrar, Straux, and Giroux, 1959), p. 74.

[31] Other bird imagery could be studied in the novel. The names of Stephen's friends, Heron with "a bird's face as well as a bird's name," (p. 76) and Cranly are very important. The use of the name Crane suggests the dances linked with the original labyrinth designs. See H.L.C. Jaffé, "Les Labyrinthes," Situationist Times, 4 (1963), 23.

[32] "The Problem of Distance in A Portrait of the Artist," The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 327.

[33] James Joyce: Two Decades of Criticism, ed. Seon Givens (New York: Vanguard Press, 1948), p. 169.

[34] "A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man," The English Novel: Form and Function (New York: Harper and Row, 1953), p. 331.

[35] Elogio de la Sombra (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969), pp. 115-6.

CHAPTER 111

FRANZ KAFKA

The labyrinth is a central image in Kafka's writings.[1] A brief examination of various figurations of this image in the diaries, fragments, fables and short stories will first be considered. Our study will then concern itself with the three representative works: "The Great Wall of China," "The Burrow," and The Castle.

Major labyrinth constructs like the tunnel and the cage may be traced in Kafka's diaries and short works. Let us present a few of these related and recurring images. The tunnel is a noteworthy example of a labyrinth passage. In his Notebooks (Oct. 20, 1917), Kafka describes such a passageway without entrance or exit:

> Seen with the terrestrial sullied eye, we are in the situation of travellers in a train that has met with an accident in a tunnel, and this at a place where the light of the beginning can no longer be seen, and the light of the end is so very small a glimmer that the gaze must continually search for it and is always losing it again, and, furthermore, both the beginning and the end are not even certainties. Round about us, ... we have nothing but monstrosities....[2]

This modern illustration of Plato's cave parable[3] is one labyrinth image which depicts Kafka's vision of desolation and helplessness.

Kafka employs circle imagery to demonstrate the belief that "in my beginning is my end." He professes that human destinies close:

> We ... are held in our past and future.... So this circle along whose rim we move almost closes. Well, this circle indeed belongs to us, but belongs to us only so long as we keep to it,...[4]

In "Reflections on Sin, Pain, Hope, and the True Way," Kafka alludes to life as a series of confining concentric circles:

> Two tasks on the threshold of life: To narrow your circle more and more, and constantly to make certain that you have not hidden yourself somewhere outside it.[5]

In general, circle figurations portray life as an enclosure.

The cell and the cage are the most repeated images of the closed labyrinth in Kafka's short writings. In the parable "The Cell," the terrified narrator discovers that he has journeyed into a place of confinement. Bachelard's definition of a labyrinth as "une prison allongée" is very applicable in this circumstance:[6]

> "How did I get here?" I exclaimed.... Although there were several doors, if one opened them one only found oneself standing in front of a dark, smooth rock-face, scarcely a handbreadth beyond the threshold and extending vertically upwards and horizontally on both sides, seemingly without any end. Here was no way out.[7]

In the more well-known stories, "A Report to an Academy," "A Hunger Artist," and "The Metamorphosis," the cage image embodies the paradoxical aspect of a labyrinth as both a refuge and a prison. The ape in "A Report to an Academy" relates how he strove for the better "way out" from his cage:

> ... there were two alternatives before me: the Zoological Gardens or the variety stage. I did not hesitate. I said to myself: do your utmost to get onto the variety stage; the Zoological Gardens means only a new cage;...[8]

A reverse movement is perceptible in "A Hunger Artist" where the emaciated artist dreads to leave his cage after the periods of fasting: "... never yet, after any term of fasting - this must be granted to his credit - had he left the cage of his own free will."[9] Gregor Samsa in "The Metamorphosis" is confined for life within his house, secluded in his room, and enclosed in his insect carapace. In fact, he is trapped in "a whole series of prisons, one within the other."[10]

To continue our study of the cage image, let us note that Kafka, in a conversation with Gustav Janouch, confessed that the artist feels incarcerated by life: "...Art for the artist is only suffering, through which he releases himself for further suffering. He is not a giant, but only a more or less brightly plumaged bird in the cage of his existence."[11] In summary, Kafka utilizes the image of a cage, a cell, a prison-like room, and a tunnel, in order to portray the human condition.[12]

As a further consideration of these prison images, Kafka's parable "In the Caravansary" suggests the picture of a labyrinth within a labyrinth: an architectural construct within a geographical landscape:

> It was only a small place, a tiny oasis, but it was entirely occupied by the caravansary and that, to be sure, was immense. It was impossible,... for a stranger to find his way about there.... one had lost one's way, went back into the dark square and through the first arch. It was of no avail, once again one was in the second court and had to ask one's way through several courtyards before arriving back in the first courtyard, from which one had, however, actually gone only a few paces away.[13]

Following these few examples of diverse labyrinth figurations in Kafka's short works, it is of interest to review very briefly the novels America and The Trial. The labyrinth image is intrinsic to the major novels. "The world of Amerika, of The Trial, and The Castle, ... is a labyrinth. In this labyrinth, one moves constantly from place to place without ever getting anywhere, or reaching anything conclusive, or even knowing whether there is a goal to be reached."[14]

The original title of Kafka's novel America was "Lost Without Trace" (Der Verschollene).[15] This evocative title indicates the action and theme of the narration. In the dramatic first scene, Karl Rossmann is unable to find his way in the corridors of the ship:

> ... he had painfully to find his way down endlessly recurring stairs, through corridors with countless turnings, through an empty room with a deserted writing-table, until in the end, since he had taken this route no more than once or twice and always among a crowd of other people, he lost himself completely....
> "I've lost my way," said Karl,...[16]

With respect to this novel, Sokel has analyzed the image of the labyrinth in a chapter "Das Labyrinth und Amerika."[17]

Concerning The Trial, the image of the labyrinth constitutes the setting. Many examples of the labyrinth image in this novel should be underlined. One of the more memorable figurations is the courtroom in which K. wanders:

> K. turned toward the stairs to make his way up to the Court of Inquiry, but then came to a standstill again, for in addition to this staircase he could see in the courtyard three other separate flights of stairs and besides these a little passage at the other end which seemed to lead into a second courtyard....[18]

Another labyrinth construct is the interminable line of guardians. In the parable "Before the Law," the first attendant cautions K.: "... I am only the lowest doorkeeper. From hall to hall, keepers stand at every door, one more powerful than the other."[19] In "Le Labyrinthe, espace significatif," Ronse posits that in The Trial "le labyrinthe punitif ... est clos, désespérément fermé."[20]

Closely related to the tunnel, the circle, the cage, the corridor, the courtroom and the doors, other labyrinth images like the Tower of Babel and the burrow will now be given particular attention. These architectonic images are prevalent in Kafka's complete writings.

> Burrow, maze, and tower, three kinds of construction, predominate in the imagery of Kafka's later writings. Thus the parable "The Great Wall of China" ... contains a comparison of the wall with the Tower of Babel. The Tower of Babel, a labyrinthine edifice, a utopian vision of man's presumption and the inaccessibility of the absolute, in turn casts its shadow over the grand design of The Castle.[21]

1

The three dominant labyrinth images, the wall, the Tower of Babel and the vastness of China, in "The Great Wall of China," represent the fundamental themes of the eternally unfinished and the unattainability of the goal. In this parable, the central action delineates a kingdom's involvement in the construction of an immense and endless wall which will enclose and protect the entire country's territory. The formidability of such a venture is manifest in the proposed piecemeal plan.

Because of the wall's vastness and endlessness, it is impossible to comprehend its totality or confirm its completeness. "In fact it is said that there are gaps which have never been filled in at all, ... and which cannot be verified, ... on account of the extent of the structure."[22] This wall or fortification serves neither as a shelter nor as a prison: "... how can a wall protect if it is not a continuous structure?" (p. 153) However, it may be the foundation for a new Tower of Babel. A scholar surmised that the Tower of Babel was unable to reach heaven because of its weak foundation. It is observed that this wall will be an excellent support for the new Tower: "... the Great Wall alone would provide for the first time in the history of mankind a secure foundation for a new Tower of Babel. First the wall, therefore, and then the tower." (p. 158) Kafka believes it is innate in man to have the desire of ascension through an architectural design:

> The essential thing in the whole business is the idea of building a tower that will reach to heaven ... so long as there are men on the earth there will be also the irresistible desire to complete the building.[23]

In the parable "The Great Wall of China," the infinite expanse of the land is another labyrinth image. The spatial dimension of China is boundless: "So vast is our land that no fable could do justice to its vastness, the heavens can scarcely span it." (p. 164) The critic Dentan explicates the importance of this immense natural landscape as an image of the inaccessible:

> La Chine ... immensité spatiale et temporelle où l'on n'en finit jamais d'arriver, s'offre comme une image toute naturelle pour exprimer un sentiment d'inachèvement, de totalité insaisissable.[24]

Since the country is extensive, it follows that the ruler is remote and unreachable. The parable "An Imperial Message," emphasizes the insuperable distance between the Emperor and his people. A messenger is sent with the ruler's dying words, but he cannot deliver the message since he is trapped in the "Chinese" labyrinth:

> The messenger immediately sets out on his journey; .... But the multitudes are so vast; their numbers have no end .... still he is only making his way through the chambers of the innermost palace; never will he get to the end of them; and if he succeeded in that nothing would be gained; he must fight his way next down the stair; and if he succeeded in that nothing would be gained; the courts would still have to be crossed; and after the courts the second outer palace; and once more stairs and courts and once more another palace; and so on for thousands of years; and if at last he should burst through the outermost gate- but never, never can that happen- the imperial capital would lie before him, the centre of the world, crammed to bursting with its own refuse. Nobody could fight his way through here even with a message from a dead man.-

> But you sit at your window when evening falls and dream it to yourself. (pp. 166-7)

Effectively, in a very simplified form, Kafka's "A Chinese Puzzle" is comparable to the complex labyrinthine imperial courts:

> Once there was a Chinese puzzle, a cheap simple toy,... Cut into the flat wood, which was painted reddish-brown, there were some blue labyrinthine paths, which all led into a little hole. The ball,... had to be got into one of the paths by means of tilting and shaking the box, and then into the hole.[25]

To summarize, the imperial courts, the vast territory of China, the Tower of Babel, one of Kafka's favorite images, and the wall comprise the labyrinth figurations of this short story. Borges, in the "Prólogo" to his translation of a few of Kafka's works, comments on the many levels of magnitude or boundless space in this story:

> ... el infinito es múltiple: para detener el curso de ejércitos infinitamente lejanos, un emperador infinitaremoto en el tiempo y en el espacio ordena que infinitas generaciones levanten infinitamente un muro infinito que dé la vuelta de su imperio infinito.[26]

11

Although the particular labyrinth at the entrance of the burrow, the castle keep, the cells and the forest outside are all figurations of the labyrinth, our purpose will be to limit ourselves to the "labyrinthine burrow" as the main and encompassing image. This burrow is a classic instance of a labyrinth which is at once both a place of refuge and a prison. Frederick Karl has distinguished the dual nature of the image:

> ... [it] offers so much pleasure and yet simultaneously such apprehension, is both real and symbol, refuge and prison, retreat and trap, room-like, tomb-like safety and potential source of destruction.[27]

Two moods are discernible in the story "The Burrow." In the first section, the mole wonders if the labyrinth is safe, in the second part, he (or she) worries about the noise which disturbs his tranquility. Both sections begin in a mood of joy and contentment and end in fear and anxiety.[28] The story is told from the point of view of the protagonist and he describes the labyrinth from within and from a distant perspective.

To the mole, the burrow is often a place of security and pleasure: "... these passages which suit me so well, where one can stretch oneself out in comfort, roll about in childish delight, lie and dream, or sink into blissful sleep."[29] As the architect of the labyrinth, the mole is haunted by the imperfections of his underground refuge. He dreams of a flawless labyrinth which cannot be unraveled:

> ... yet it is the labyrinth leading up to it [the entrance door] that torments me most of all. Sometimes I dream that I have reconstructed it, transformed it completely, quickly, in a night, with a giant's strength, nobody having noticed, and now it is impregnable;... (p. 94)

However, the architect and the inhabitant of this labyrinth is also its prisoner. The involuted structure proves to be indecipherable to its own fabricator:

> So I must thread the tormenting complications of this labyrinth physically as well as mentally whenever I go out, and I am both exasperated and touched when, as sometimes happens, I lose myself for a moment in my own maze, and the work of my hands seems to be still doing its best to prove its sufficiency to me, its maker,... (pp. 94-5)

Not only is the mole a captive of the intricacy of his own design, he is also a prisoner of his enemies. He waits at the center of his labyrinth. His fate is to be either victim or victor:

> ... that the beast is not making for me, ... more
> likely it has a plan in view whose purpose I cannot decipher;
> I merely assume that the beast--... is encircling me; it
> has probably made several circles round my burrow already
> since I began to observe it. (pp. 136-7)

The beast's circumscriptions can be envisaged as a labyrinth superimposed on the burrow.

In retrospect, the mole's artifact attests to the eternal need for security and isolation. His labyrinth is, indeed, both a fortress and a prison. Bachelard has examined this theme of the labyrinth as prison and refuge in his study of "The Burrow":

> ... curieuse ambivalence de sécurité et de crainte que
> le génial conteur a su multiplier. Qui fait une sape
> craint la contre-sape. L'être du terrier - quelque
> blaireau fait homme - entend les lointains échos d'une
> terre travaillée. Sous terre, tous les bruits sont
> hostiles. Et sans cesse reviennent les contradictions
> de l'être enfermé: il est protégé, mais il est
> prisonnier.[30]

III

We will approach The Castle, first, by analyzing the outstanding labyrinth figurations. These various images are the inexorably coiling streets, the immense village, the acoustic labyrinth,[31] the barriers, the circle, and the corridors. It is to be noted that associated with these images, one situation is intrinsic, that of the wanderer in the labyrinth and his relation to a center, the Castle. The related themes of the inaccessibility of a goal, of waiting, and of fixity and mobility will be explored.

Initially, it seems advisable to acknowledge that one critic, Politzer in Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox, has studied the labyrinth image in The Castle. His postulation is that: "the word 'labyrinth' indicates a basic structural design that Kafka has used as a ground plan for many of his works, especially, ... *The Castle*."[32] This critic alleges that the mannerist Czech author Komensky in his work *The Labyrinth of the World and the Paradise of the Heart* influenced Kafka. Politzer compares this novel, where a pilgrim and his two companions wander in a labyrinth, to *The Castle*:

> The combination of Castle, Labyrinth, and Land-Surveyorship, as well as the conception of 'measuring' as an incommensurable boasting (Anmassung), would suggest that Kafka was influenced, perhaps directly, by Komensky.[33]

In outline form, the action of the story consists of K.'s endeavors to attain the castle. One day K. arrives in a strange village to work as a landsurveyor. However, throughout the novel, the administration never confirms or denies his appointment. He is incessantly obstructed by others in his efforts to enter the castle. Ultimately, the conflict lies between two entities, the wanderer and the castle. And this opposition is never resolved.

> The land surveyor lives with only one idea - he wants to get into the castle. His every effort ends with failure, and his every failure increases his efforts. The novel continually reproduces, in different forms, the same basic situation. The action does not move forward but describes a circle. [34]

Moreover, it is pertinent to underline that the novel itself was left unfinished. In a note to Max Brod, Kafka stated that: "the ostensible Land-Surveyor was to find partial satisfaction at least. He was not to relax in his struggle, but was to die worn out by it."[35]

The circular and interminable roads which K. threads are striking labyrinth figurations. A representation of such a tortuous path is instanced at the outset of the novel. K. is perturbed by the road that never leads to the castle:

> So he resumed his walk, but the way proved long. For the street he was in, the main street of the village, did not lead up to the Castle hill; it only made toward it and then, as if deliberately, turned aside, and though it did not lead away from the Castle, it led no nearer to it either.[36]

K. obstinately pursues his quest due to his assurance that "this endless journey" (p. 77) must somehow cease:

> ... he vowed to himself that however difficult the way and however doubtful even the prospect of his being able to get back, he would not cease from going on .... And the road must come to an end some time. (pp. 38-9)

Indeed, as Kafka once explained, "there is a goal, but no way; what we call the way is only wavering."[37]

The desolation of the winter landscape and the limitlessness of the village surrounding are other labyrinth images. The hamlet appears boundless and bare:

> ... he was also amazed at the length of the village, which seemed to have no end-- again and again the same little houses and frost-bound windowpanes and snow and the entire absence of human beings--... (p. 15)

In addition, the telephone conversation with the castle may be seen as an acoustic labyrinth. The immeasurable distance between the castle and the village is illustrated by the remote sound: "... a buzz of a kind that K. had never before heard on a telephone.... yet not a hum, the echo rather of voices singing at an infinite distance-- blended by sheer impossibility into one high resonant sound..." (p. 27) Concerning this figuration of the labyrinth, Politzer writes:

> Acoustically, infinity seems to have reverberated in the telephone in order to expose him to the unending path of self-deception along which he has already begun to wander.[38]

Multiple barriers imprison the wanderer in the labyrinth. These obstacles prevent him from acceding to his destination. Two very important examples of these barriers are pictured in the novel. In the first case, Barnabas cannot surmount the office barriers in the castle:

> He's admitted into certain rooms, but they're only a part of the whole, for there are barriers behind which there are more rooms.... And you mustn't imagine that these barriers are a definite dividing- line; .... There are barriers even at the entrance to the rooms where he's admitted so you see there are barriers he can pass, and they're just the same as the ones he's never yet passed,....
> (pp. 228-9)

Undoubtedly, more subtle and unidentifiable barriers confront the protagonist. K. ignores the reason why he fails in his successive attempts to see Klamm. The landlady explains that all his ventures are futile since Klamm is inaccessible: "... that Herr Klamm will never speak to [K]- will never speak, did I say?-- can never speak to him." (p. 63) Klamm resembles an eagle because of his "remoteness, of his impregnable dwelling, of his silence." (p. 151) With these examples in mind, we may designate these demarcations or barriers as enclosures within a labyrinth.

Circle imagery delineates K.'s path to the castle. This prominent labyrinth figuration is especially important in tracing his itinerary before his encounter with Frieda: "before I knew you I was going about in a blind circle." (p. 179) Frieda likewise perceives that K.'s wanderings are circuitous:

> How startled I was ... when you said today that before you knew me you had gone about here in a blind circle. These might actually be the same words that the landlady used, she too says that it's only since you have known me that you've become aware of your goal. That's because you believe you have secured in me a sweetheart of Klamm's,

> and so possess a hostage that can only be ransomed at a great price. (pp. 202-3)

A further labyrinth image is the low and winding corridors of the Herenhof which succeed in imprisoning K.:

> In the hall they were met by an attendant who led them the old way, already known to K., across the courtyard, then into the entry and through the low, somewhat downward sloping passage.... The passage was just high enough for one to walk without bending one's head. Along both sides the doors almost touched one another. The walls did not quite reach to the ceiling,... for here in the low cellar-like passage the tiny rooms could hardly have windows. (p. 314)

In this corridor, as in the other labyrinth figurations, K. remains on the periphery of a labyrinth. In regards to the above example, Politzer develops this point:

> This corridor, subterranean, carefully constructed according to a well-considered design, interrupted by a multiplicity of closed doors, is still only the fringe of a labyrinth.[39]

All the labyrinth figurations just presented incorporate the major themes of the novel: inaccessibility of a goal, waiting, and fixity and mobility. These themes are succinctly underlined by Beissner and Hassan in their apt phrases. Beissner sees it as "_the unsuccessful arrival or the failure to reach the goal_."[40] Hassan purports that "the true quest may be seen at last: a quest for questlessness." [41]

Concerning the theme of the inaccessibility of the goal, two axes must be contrasted. On the one hand, K.'s progress is illusory, on the other hand, the goal itself fluctuates. Although perseverant in his struggle and confident of his advance, K. is repeatedly told that he is self-deceived:

> You haven't once up to now come into real contact with our authorities. All those contacts of yours have been illusory, but because of your ignorance of the circumstances you take them to be real. (p. 93)

Throughout the novel, K. is also unaware of the endlessness of his journey, for he "believed that everything could be settled by a short walk in the evening." (p. 222) Apart from K.'s delusions, the goals are transformed. An outstanding example of this metamorphosis is the protean nature of Klamm: "for he's reported as having one appearance when he comes into the village and another on leaving it, ... he's almost another person up in the Castle." (pp.230-1)

Waiting is a central phenomena in The Castle. Both K. and Barnabas "stand and wait." The essence of their existence is characterized by this inanition. When K. waits alone in the snow-covered courtyard for Klamm, he reflects that there is "... nothing more senseless, nothing more hopeless, than this freedom, this waiting, this inviolability." (p. 105) Parallel to K.'s situation, Barnabas' futile days spent in idle expectation are disclosed by Olga:

> Of course all that useless standing about and waiting all day, and day after day, and going on and on and on without any prospect of a change, must break a man down and make him unsure of himself and in the end actually incapable of anything else but this hopeless standing about. (p. 213)

Accompanying the themes of the inaccessible goal and of waiting, is the idea of fixity in mobility. This idea finds expression in K.'s incessant wandering that leads nowhere. It is Borges' contention that this theme of the impossibility of arrival is primary in Kafka. In an incisive essay, "Kafka and His Precursors," Borges writes:

> The first [precursor] is Zeno's paradox against movement. A moving object at A (declares Aristotle) cannot reach point B, because it must first cover half the distance between the two points, and before that, half of the half of the half, and so on to infinity; the form of this illustrious problem is, exactly, that of The Castle, and the moving object and the arrow and Achilles are the first Kafkian characters in literature.[42]

In an other order of thought, the novel as a labyrinth should be indicated. The chapters do not progress. Like K., they move in a vicious circle. This spiral dimension has been noticed by some critics. To conclude, let us emphasize this circularity of the novel.

> The novel continually reproduces, in different forms, the same basic situation. The action does not move forward but describes a circle. ... the plot goes around in place, the ending of every episode returns to the beginning of the previous one.[43]

NOTES

[1] Heinz Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1966), pp. 230-1.

[2] "The Third Octavo Note-book," *Wedding Preparations in the Country and Other Posthumous Prose Writings*, trans. Ernst Kaiser and Eithne Wilkins (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), p. 73.

[3] A.P. Foulkes, "Kafka's Cage Image," *Modern Language Notes*, 82 (1967), 464.

[4] *The Diaries of Franz Kafka, 1910-1913*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), p. 27.

[5] *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken Books, 1946), p. 302.

[6] "Le Labyrinthe," *La Terre et les rêveries du repos* (Paris: José Corti, 1948), p. 226.

[7] *Parables and Paradoxes: Parabeln und Paradoxe*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), p. 117.

[8] *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer (New York: Schocken Books, 1971), pp.257-8.

[9] Ibid., p. 270.

[10] Mary Ann Witt, "Confinement in "Die Verwandlung" and *Les Séquestrés d'Altona*," *Comparative Literature*, 23 (1971), 34.

[11] *Conversations with Kafka: Notes and Reminiscences*, trans. Goronwy Rees (London: Derek Verschoyle, 1953), p. 28.

[12] There is one article on the cage image in Kafka. See A.P. Foulkes, "Kafka's Cage Image."

[13] *Parables and Paradoxes: Parabeln und Paradoxe*, pp. 111, 113.

[14] J. Hillis Miller, Jr., "Franz Kafka and the Metaphysics of Alienation," *The Tragic Vision and the Christian Faith*, ed. Nathan A. Scott, Jr. (New York: Association Press, 1957), p. 289.

[15] Friedrich Beissner, "Kafka the Artist," *Kafka: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Ronald Gray (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 15. "Kafka referred to the novel known as *America* as "Der Verschollene."

[16] America, trans. Edwin and Willa Muir (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1938), p. 2.

[17] Franz Kafka- Tragik und Ironie: Zur Struktur seiner Kunst (München-Wien: Albert Langen Georg Müller, 1964), pp. 321-2. Here he asserts that: "Im Heizer-Kapitel war Amerika der im Sonnenlicht blitzende Kontrast zum dunklen Labyrinth des Schiffsinneren. Im siebenten Kapitel ist Amerika selbst nächtig, düster und labyrinthen geworden. Diese Annäherung Amerikas an das Labyrinthische und Finstere beginnt schon im dritten Kapitel,.... Hier mischen sich Elemente des Schauerromans, der gothic novel, Hoffmanns und Poes, mit der für Kafka typischen Form des klassischen Expressionismus." Bachelard in "Le Labyrinthe," La Terre et les rêveries du repos, has studied the labyrinth image in America. He has noted how the first scene is an example of "à la fois sujet et objet conglomérés en être perdu." p. 212.

[18] The Trial, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 44.

[19] Ibid., pp. 267-8.

[20] Cahiers internationaux de symbolisme, 9-10 (1965-1966), 28.

[21] Politzer, Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox, pp, 320-1.

[22] "The Great Wall of China," The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections, p.153. Subsequent quotations from "The Great Wall of China" are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[23] "The City Coat of Arms," Parables and Paradoxes: Parabeln und Paradoxe, p. 37.

[24] "L'Ambiguité de l'art et de ses moyens d'expression," Humour et création littéraire dans l'oeuvre de Kafka (Paris: Minard, 1961), p. 150.

[25] Parables and Paradoxes: Parabeln und Paradoxe, p. 177.

[26] La metamorfosis, trans. Jorge Luis Borges (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1943), p. 10.

[27] "Enclosure, The Adversary Culture, and the Nature of the Novel," Mosaic, 7, No. 3 (Spring 1974), 1.

[28] Heinrich Henel, "Kafka's *Der Bau*, or How to Escape from a Maze," *The Discontinuous Tradition*, ed. P.F. Ganz (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 224.

[29] "The Burrow," *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections*, pp. 109-10. Subsequent quotations from "The Burrow" are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[30] Bachelard, "Le Labyrinthe," *La Terre et les rêveries du repos*, p. 243.

[31] This term is from Politzer. See *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, p. 246.

[32] Ibid., p. 105.

[33] Ibid., pp. 233-4. Ronald Gray reports that Kafka had read Komensky. In one of Kafka's letters, July 1922, Komensky is alluded to. See *Franz Kafka* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1973), p. 401.

[34] Roman Karst, "Franz Kafka: Word-Space-Time," *Mosaic*, 3, No. 4 (Summer 1970), 12.

[35] "Publisher's Note," *The Castle*, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: The Modern Library, 1969), p. vi.

[36] *The Castle*, p. 14. Subsequent quotations from *The Castle* are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[37] "Reflections on Sin, Pain, Hope, and the True Way," *The Great Wall of China: Stories and Reflections*, p. 283.

[38] Politzer, *Franz Kafka: Parable and Paradox*, pp. 247-8.

[39] Ibid., p. 230.

[40] "Kafka the Artist," *Kafka: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Ronald Gray (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1962), p. 19.

[41] "Kafka: The Authority of Ambiguity," *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1971), p. 137.

[42] *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 199. Borges repeats this idea in his "Prólogo," to his translation of

La Metamorfosis (Buenos Aires: Editorial Losada, 1943), pp. 10-11. Kafka's protagonists are direct descendants of Zeno. Borges explains this further: "El *pathos* de esas "inconclusas" novelas nace precisamente del número infinito de obstáculos que detienen y vuelven a detener a sus héroes idénticos. Franz Kafka no las terminó, porque lo primordial era que fuesen interminables. Recordáis la primera y la más clara de las paradojas de Zenón? El movimiento es imposible, pues antes de llegar a B deberemos atravesar el punto intermedio C, pero antes de llegar a C, deberemos atravesar el punto intermedio D,..."

[43] Karst, "Franz Kafka: Word-Space-Time," pp. 12-3.

CHAPTER IV

JORGE LUIS BORGES

In contemporary literature, Borges is the most well-known "labyrinth - maker."[1] This image of the labyrinth may be found in all his short stories and poems written after 1938.[2] The image embodies and unites all his fundamental and recurrent themes. It may be considered the essential image in all his writings. "Il y a, au centre de l'oeuvre de Borgès, une figure qui les rassemble toutes,.... Cette figure est celle du labyrinthe."[3] This image poignantly depicts his vision of man's destiny and of the universe.

Borges has discussed, in a few interviews, aspects of his use of the image. It is informative to note a few of these comments. In an interesting anecdote, Borges reveals his original fascination for the labyrinth:

> It's the most obvious symbol of feeling puzzled and baffled, isn't it? It came to me through an engraving when I was a boy, an engraving of the seven wonders of the world, and there was one of the labyrinth.... I thought that if I looked into it, if I peered into it very closely, perhaps I might make out the minotaur at the center.[4]

In a conversation with Charbonnier, Borges attests to the inspirational role of the labyrinth image in the composition of one of his short stories, "The Garden of Forking Paths":

> Je crois que deux idées sont à l'origine: l'idée du labyrinthe, qui m'a toujours hanté, et du monde comme labyrinthe,.... Je me suis amusé à l'idée non pas de se perdre dans un labyrinthe, mais dans un labyrinthe qui se perd aussi lui-même. Il y a là quelque chose que j'ai trouvé drôle et qui a stimulé mon imagination.[5]

In the same interview, Borges acknowledges that his short story "The Library of Babel" resembles a Piranesi etching: "un très beau labyrinthe d'escaliers, de chambres, de bibliothèques, etc. Tout cela faisait penser à Piranèse."[6]

Apart from these interviews, Borges, as critic, has examined the labyrinth image in a few authors, for example: Pascal, De Quincey, Poe, Chesterton and Valéry. In the essay, "The Fearful Sphere of Pascal," Borges traces the history and interpretation of circle imagery in works which preceded the seventeenth century. He concludes that the infinite sphere "became a labyrinth and an abyss for Pascal."[7] For De Quincey, the labyrinth is "_the_ metaphor."[8] In the prologue to Adolfo Bioy Casares' novel, _The Invention of Morel_, Borges notes:

> De Quincey plunged deep into labyrinths on his nights of meticulously detailed horror, but he did not coin his impression of "unutterable and self-repeating infinities" in fables comparable to Kafka's.[9]

Borges admires Poe's ability to create an atmosphere of unreality and horror due to scenic labyrinthine enclosures.[10] Chesterton's detective stories taught Borges the art of "constructing" stories aimed towards a well-planned end.[11] Not only did Chesterton see life as a labyrinth but he compared the mind to an intricate maze design. Borges refers to this author thus:

> ... a contriver of nightmares, a _monstrorum artifex_ (Pliny, XXVIII, 2), but he tends inevitably to revert to atrocious observations.... he speaks of a jail of mirrors; of a labyrinth without a center;....[12]

About Valéry, Borges has written that he "illustriously personifies the labyrinths of the mind."[13]

Concerning Borges' use of only a "handful of metaphors," in an early essay, "A Profession of Literary Faith," he confessed: "I have already overcome my poverty; I have recognized, among thousands, the nine or ten words which accord with my heart...."[14] Indubitably, the "labyrinth" is one of these nine or ten words. Borges iteration of the word labyrinth is multifarious. This word labyrinth includes nearly all inanimate and animate entities. A few examples will illustrate: "the braided labyrinth of smells," "a labyrinth of flames," "labyrinths of the god," "fate's labyrinthine laws," "labyrinth of letters," "the labyrinths of our dreams," "maze of metaphysics," "labyrinth of tigers," "maze of indefatigable mirrors," "a labyrinth of symbols," and "a labyrinth of labyrinths."[15]

In general, we may distinguish two major types of labyrinths in Borges' short fiction: the natural and the contrived, or the geographical and the architectonic. It is worthy of note that Barrenechea suggests this opposition:

> Not only do houses and palaces become labyrinths — with their corridors, galleries, patios, circular chambers, wells, basements, winding staircases -- but also streets, plazas, cities (Banaras, Buenos Aires, London), as well as the infinite desert, waterways, and vast geographic areas wherein marshes and swamps tend to accentuate the chaotic...[16]

Rodriguez-Monegal in "Symbols in Borges' Work," reiterates this contrast between human artifacts and natural landscapes:

> ... an endless river is a labyrinth of water; a forest is a labyrinth of vegetation. In a similar way, it serves also to represent certain human constructions: a library is a labyrinth of books; any large city is a labyrinth of streets and houses.[17]

This dichotomy between various labyrinth figurations will be central to our later analysis of representative stories.

The labyrinth image first appeared in Borges' poem "Del Infierno y Del Cielo."[18] The labyrinth is Borges most frequent image and may be found in most poems and short stories. To Borges, the labyrinth is a very personal image which evokes his own situation in the world. As "maker" of labyrinths, Borges in an "Epilogue" (1960) revealed his Ars Poetica:

> A man sets himself the task of portraying the world. Through the years he peoples a space with images of provinces, kingdoms, mountains, bays, ships, islands, fishes, rooms, instruments, stars, horses, and people. Shortly before his death, he discovers that the patient labyrinth of lines traces the image of his face. [19]

Likewise, in retrospect, Borges life will trace a labyrinthian path:

> Oh destiny of Borges
> to have sailed across the diverse seas of the world...
> to have questioned lithographs, encyclopedias, atlases,
> to have seen the things that men see,...
> and to have seen nothing, or almost nothing
> except the face of a girl from Buenos Aires... [20]

In order to study the labyrinth image in Borges, we have chosen six representative short stories: "Ibn Hakkan al Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth," "Death and the Compass," "The God's Script," "The Immortal," "The House of Asterion," and "The Library of Babel." It might be advisable, at this point, to explain the reason for the order of this choice. In outline form, the order of the stories trace a journey in the labyrinth. We view the first four short stories from the perspective of the initiate - prisoner voyaging towards the center of the labyrinth. In the fifth story, "The House of Asterion," we penetrate into the center of the labyrinth and encounter the minotaur within.

The method of approach adopted, for each story, centers around two general ideas: various labyrinth figurations and the wanderer in the labyrinth. On the one hand, labyrinthine constructs such as the sands of the desert, the city, the library, the configuration of spots on a tiger, will be regarded. On the other hand, themes related to the labyrinth construct such as the themes of "égarement," of initiation, of imprisonment, of metamorphosis, of the double, of the eternal return, and the idea of infinity, will be suggested.

I

In "Ibn Hakkan al-Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth," two young Englishmen, a poet and a mathematician, visit a labyrinth built by Ibn Hakkan - Zaid on the cliffs of Cornwall: "the crimson labyrinth on the high dunes in sight of the sea."[21] This labyrinth with its many corridors is comparable to a spider's web and it leads to a central vault. It is described as a prison and as an infinite circle: "the room, though spacious, had about it something of a prison cell;" (p. 81) and it had "the shape of a circle, but so wide was this circle, that its curve was almost invisible." (p. 76)

Inspired by this visit, Dunraven and Unwin propose different interpretations behind the fabrication of this labyrinth. Dunraven witnessed the actual construction of Ibn Hakkan's labyrinth and since it resembled the Tower of Biblical lore, "I broadened his title and dubbed him King of Babel." (p. 77) Dunraven retells the story which Ibn Hakkan told the priest. Ibn Hakkan and his cousin Zaid had plundered the desert tribes and escaped with the wealth they had amassed. The night of their flight, Ibn Hakkan had a dream about entrapment in "a tangle of snakes .... a spider web against my flesh had made me dream that dream." (p. 78) He suddenly kills Zaid and fearing revenge of Zaid's ghost, he builds a labyrinth in which to find refuge. However, this refuge soon becomes a place of imprisonment and subsequent death.

Unwin, after hearing Dunraven's account of the story, and inspired by the figure of the minotaur at the center of the mythical labyrinth, "I thought about the labyrinth of Crete. The labyrinth whose center was a man with the head of a bull," (p. 82) and by the image of the spider's web, infers an opposite conjecture. He propounds that the murder happened due to mistaken identities: "He pretended to be Ibn Hakkan, he killed Ibn Hakkan, and in the end he became Ibn Hakkan .... Such metamorphoses are classic rules of the game." (p. 84)

In review, we can establish a brief enumeration of labyrinth images in this story: the "sand wastes of Egypt," the island of Cornwall, the Cretán labyrinth, the Tower of Babel, the spider's web, the tangle of snakes, the circle, the labyrinthine dream, and the city of London. A few basic themes evolving from these images is that of initiation, metamorphosis, encounter with one's double and with death at the center.

As an epilogue to this story, Borges wrote "The Two Kings and Their Two Labyrinths." Here, he opposes urban and natural geographical mazes. A man-made labyrinth and a vast desert expanse are compared:

> In Babylon you lured me into a labyrinth of brass cluttered with many stairways, doors, and walls; now the Almighty has brought it to pass that I show you mine, which has no stairways to climb, nor doors to force, nor unending galleries to wear one down, nor walls to block one's way. (p. 59)

Borges' view is that a desert, a city or the world are far more intricate labyrinths than the mazes constructed by man and which adhere to the traditional Egyptian or Cretan models.[22] Unwin remarks that Ibn Hakkan was foolish to build a labyrinth:

> He ha[d] no need to erect a labyrinth when the whole world already is one. For anyone who really wants to hide away, London is a better labyrinth. (pp. 81-2)

Labyrinth images are clues in the detective story "Death and the Compass." Erik Lönnrot resolves Scharlach's tree planned murders. He foresees that the fourth and final death will occur at the villa Triste-le-Roy. The solution to these murders was the "perfect rhomb." However, the labyrinth which Lönnrot successfully deciphers leads to his own entrapment.

The major sign that discloses this mystery is the Tetragrammatron. The importance of this symbol is explained by Scharlach:

> I, nevertheless, interspersed repeated signs that would would allow you, Erik Lonnrot, the reasoner, to understand that the series was quadruple. A portent in the north, others in the east and west, demand a fourth portent in the south; the Tetragrammaton- the name of God, JHVH- is made up of four letters;....[23]

Other clues are the diamond patterns on the carnival costumes and on the shop's walls. Scharlach explicates their relevancy as clues: "the harlequins and the paint shop sign suggested four points." (p. 86)

From the equilateral triangle formed by the three previous murders, Scharlach believes Lönnrot "would add the missing point. The point which would form a perfect rhomb, the point which fixes in advance where a punctual death awaits you." (p. 86) This missing point is the villa Triste-le-Roy. This architectural labyrinth "abounds in pointless symmetries and in maniacal repetitions." (p. 83) Lönnrot becomes lost in this chaotic and vast edifice:

> Through anterooms and galleries he passed to duplicate patios, and time after time to the same patio. He ascended the dusty stairs to circular antechambers; he was multiplied infinitely in opposing mirrors; .... On the second floor, on the top floor, the house seemed infinite and expanding. (pp. 83-84)

The story concludes with the disclosure of the mystery by Scharlach, the "weaver" of the labyrinth. His purpose had been:

> ...to weave a labyrinth around the man who had imprisoned my brother. I have woven it and it is firm: the ingredients are a dead heresiologist, a compass, an eighteenth-century sect, a Greek word, a dagger, the diamonds of a paint shop. (p. 85)

The above revelation of labyrinth images or "ingredients" and the city of Buenos Aires itself are particular labyrinths within the grand design of the labyrinthine murderous plan. Before killing Lönnrot, however, Scharlach concedes that a more subtle and undecipherable labyrinth design would have been a straight line.

> Lönnrot considered the problem of the symmetrical and and periodic deaths.
> "In your labyrinth there are three lines too many," he said at last. "I know of one Greek labyrinth which is a single straight line. Along that line so many philosophers have lost themselves that a mere detective might well do so, too.
>
> "The next time I kill you," replied Scharlach, "I promise you that labyrinth, consisting of a single line which is invisible and unceasing." (pp. 86-87)

Lönnrot, decipherer of the labyrinth, meets his death at its center. Like Lönnrot, Francisco Laprida, in one of Borges' most known and excellent poems on the labyrinth image, deciphers the plan of his life at the moment of death:

> I was carried to this ruinous hour
> by the intricate labyrinth of steps
> woven by my days from a day that goes
> back to my birth. At last I've discovered
> the mysterious key to all my years,
> the fate of Francisco de Laprida,
> the missing letter, the perfect patten
> that was known to God from the beginning.
> In this night's mirror I can comprehand
> my unsuspected true face. The circle's
> about to close. I wait to let it come.[24]

"The God's Script" depicts a search conducted within the walls of a prison. The magician of the pyramid of Qaholom, Tzinacan, is incarcerated in a semi - circular cell. A jaguar is confined in the other cubicle.

> The prison is deep and of stone; its form, that of a nearly perfect hemisphere, though the floor (also of stone) is somewhat less than a great circle,.... A dividing wall cuts it at the center; ... in one cell am I, ... in the other there is a jaguar measuring with secret and even paces the time and space of captivity. (p. 169)

The prisoner Tzinacan believes that at the origin of creation, God hid somewhere in the universe the magical sentence which would make its discoverer immortal. The magician's goal is to locate and decipher this secret script. The spots on the jaguar may be the representation of this mysterious code since he is "one of the attributes of the god." (p. 170) The imprisoned magician labors to decode the secret sentence from the configuration of spots on the tiger.

In a fearful labyrinthian dream, the magician is told that:

> This dream is enclosed within another, and so on to infinity, which is the number of grains of sand. The path you must retrace is interminable and you will die before you ever really awake. (p. 172)

After this dream, the prisoner awakes to bless his place of refuge:[25]

> From the tireless labyrinth of dreams I returned as if to my home to the harsh prison. I blessed its dampness, I blessed its tiger, I blessed the crevice of light, I blessed my old, suffering body, I blessed the darkness and the stone. (p. 172)

In a moment of vision, at the center of this labyrinthian experience, the magician perceives the universe in its unity and diversity. This infinite is represented by the symbol of a Wheel of fire and water. "I saw the universe and I saw the intimate designs of the universe." (p. 172)

From this moment of illumination at the center of the labyrinth, the magician is metamorphosed into non - being:[26]

> Whoever has seen the universe, whoever has beheld the fiery designs of the universe, cannot think in terms of one man, of that man's trivial fortunes or misfortunes, though he be that very man. That man has been he ... now, is no one. This is why I do not pronounce the formula, why, lying here in the darkness, I let the days obliterate me. (p. 173)

To conclude, let us note that the two main labyrinth images, the prison and the spots on the jaguar oppose each other. In Murillo's terms, they are "the horizontal labyrinth of the moving jaguar and the vertical labyrinth of the cell ...."[27]

1V

There are six labyrinths in "The Immortal": the insuperable desert, the unreachable water jar, the entrance to the city of the Immortals, the city itself, the idea of the infinite and the life of the hero as a demonstration of the theme of eternal recurrence.

Although framed by a history of the manuscript and a postscript, the story is narrated from the point of view of the protagonist. The story is about Marcus Flaminius Rufus who is informed of the existence of the immortal city by a dying horseman. His attempt to locate and penetrate into this city is initiatory.[28] After drinking from a secret river that grants immortality, Rufus enters the city and is followed by a troglodyte who is later recognized to be Homer. After his initiation, Rufus returns to mortal life by drinking from a stream.

The first labyrinth which Rufus traverses is the vast "burning desert." (p. 107) A landscape of towers, pyramids, and "infinite sand" confine the hero. Rufus' unattainable expectations are revealed to him in a dream:

> I dreamt of an exiguous and nitid labyrinth: in the center was a water jar; my hands almost touched it, my eyes could see it, but so intricate and perplexed were the curves that I knew I would die before reaching it. (p. 107)

After many leagues of wandering and toil, the initiate finds the entrance to the city and a passage into another labyrinth. Since a circular cave chamber protects the city from invasion, it obstructs the hero's progression. Thus, this wall is both a prison and a place of refuge:

> There were nine doors in this cellar; eight led to a labyrinth that treacherously returned to the same chamber; the ninth (through another labyrinth) led to a second circular chamber equal to the first. (p. 109)

Rufus scales the "interminable" paths hoping to reach "a circle of sky," (p. 110) however, he descends into the still more "atrocious" city.

The City of the Immortals is a ruinous disorder. Everywhere "complexly senseless" staircases that "die[d] without leading anywhere" (p. 111) create a vertiginous atmosphere comparable to Piranesi's etchings.[29] This city is replete with tombs and graveyards. Rufus "found [him]self lying with his hands tied, in an oblong stone niche no larger than a common grave." (p. 108) Witness to this horror and meaninglessness, the hero is obliged to conclude that: "this palace is a fabrication of the gods .... The gods who built it have died .... The gods who built it were mad." (p. 110) This labyrinth, at once "frightening" and "repulsive" is "a structure compounded to confuse men; its architecture, rich in symmetries, is subordinated to that end." (p. 110) Homer judges this absurd and chaotic structure to be: "a kind of parody or inversion and also temple of the irrational gods who govern the world...." (p. 113)

The themes of infinity and eternal recurrence are metaphysical disquisitions dynamically presented in this short story by means of labyrinth images.[30] And in order to explicate further these ideas of "eternity keeps recurring...'They knew it the fervent pupils of Pythagoras...," Rufus deliberates thus:[31]

> ... every act (and every thought) is the echo of others that preceded it in the past, with no visible beginning, or the faithful presage of others that in the future will repeat it to a vertiginous degree. (p. 115)

Like the purposeless and endless repetition of staircases, tunnels, tombs, caves, pits, doors, cellars, cells: these "dark interwoven labyrinths," (p. 110) a man's life is indifferent and otiose ceaselessness: [32]

> No one is anyone, one single immortal man is all men. Like Cornelius Agrippa, I am god, I am hero, I am philosopher, I am demon and I am world, which is a tedious way of saying that I do not exist. (p. 114-5)

V

The hero of "The House of Asterion" is Pasiphae's son who waits at the center of the prison built for him by Daedalus. The only event in the story is the minotaur's "interior monologue" as he waits for a redeemer. The story, however, develops in an atmosphere of suspense and mystery. Through subtle clues and allusions, the reader recognizes the Theseus myth.

In the traditional myth, events were presented from the point of view of Theseus. The originality of Borges' story lies in the identification of the author with the monster at the center of the labyrinth.[33] In a similar manner to Picasso and Dali, in their minotaur paintings, Borges' story is from the point of view of the prince - monster. In fact, it is known that Borges was inspired by Watts' painting where a sympathetic and sad minotaur looks out from the rampart of his labyrinth.[34] The story focuses on the pathetic condition of the monster. A brief reversal of point of view occurs at the end. A direct reference to the myth is made when Theseus tells Ariadne:

> "Would you believe it, Ariadne?" said Theseus.
> "The Minotaur scarcely defended himself." (p. 140)

Our study of "The House of Asterion" will concern itself with the setting and the hero of the short story: the labyrinth and the minotaur. The labyrinth is described by its inhabitant as vast and open:

> It is true that I never leave my house, but it is also true that its doors (whose number is infinite) are open day and night to men and to animals as well. Anyone may enter. (p. 138)

The minotaur is proud that his house is so unique and intricate in design. However, he has heard reports that a comparable model can be located in Egypt: "... a house like no other on the face of the earth. (There are those who declare there is a similar one in Egypt, but they lie.)"[35] The minotaur refers to his home as a "temple of the Axes " (p. 139) which is the prototype name of a labyrinth as Borges explains in The Book of Imaginary Beings: "the two - headed ax (whose name was labrys and may have been at the root of the word labyrinth.)"[36] The palace is described as a symmetrical prison: "all the parts of the house are repeated many times, any place is another place." (p. 139)

Nevertheless, the minotaur does not consider himself a prisoner of "intersections," "courtyards," and the cellar that "branches out." (p. 139)

The 'house' of Asterion is symbol and reality of the labyrinthian nature of the universe:

> The house is the same size as the world; or rather, it is the world .... the seas and temples are also fourteen (infinite) in number. Everything is repeated many times, fourteen times, but two things in the world seem to be only once: above, the intricate sun; below, Asterion. (pp. 139-40)

Asterion wonders if he was not the creator of this involuted construction: "Perhaps I have created the stars and the sun and this enormous house, but I no longer remember." (p. 140) [37]

Although there is a possibility that he was not the builder of his house, he is the officiate at the lustral ceremonies: "Every nine years nine men enter the house so that I may deliver them from all evil." (p. 140)

The minotaur at the center of his labyrinth waits for his redeemer. He impatiently wonders who he will be: "Will he be a bull or a man? Will he perhaps be a bull with the face of a man? Or will he be like me?" (p. 140) [38]

In Borges' oeuvre, two other poems are from the point of view of the minotaur at the center of the labyrinth. Like in "The House of Asterion", the minotaur of the poem "The Labyrinth" is uncertain of his identity and awaits his slayer with anxiety. The minotaur knows that the only means of escape from his prison and refuge is death. The labyrinth is "the place where death is equated with the final destruction of the self, or, perhaps, with the liberation into nothingness."[39]

Zeus, Zeus himself could not undo these nets
Of stone encircling me ....
I know that hidden in the shadows there
Lurks another, whose task is to exhaust
The loneliness that braids and weaves this hell,
To crave my blood, and to fatten on my death.
We seek each other. Oh, if only this[40]
Were the last day of our antithesis!

In another poem "Laberinto," there is no monster at the center. This idea of a labyrinth without a monster haunts Borges. He has explicated its meaning in frequent interviews and in his stories. In The Book of Imaginary Beings, Borges writes: "... the image of the labyrinth fits with the image of the Minotaur. It is equally fitting that in the center of a monstrous house there be a monstrous inhabitant."[41] This idea is continued in an interview with Dembo: "... if there is no monster, then the whole thing is senseless, and that would be the case for the universe, for all we know."[42]

If the monstrous is abolished from the labyrinth, only the meaningless remains. The poem "Laberinto" is, indeed, the antithesis of "The House of Asterion":

No habrá nunca una puerta. Estás adentro
Y el alcázar abarca el universo
Y no tiene ni anverso ni reverso
Ni externo muro ni secreto centro.
No esperes que el rigor dé tu camino
Que tercamente se bifurca en otro,
Que tercamente se bifurca en otro,
Tendrá fin. Es de hierro tu destino
Como tu juez. No aguardes la embestida
Del toro que es un hombre y cuya extraña
Forma plural da horror a la maraña
De interminable piedra entretejida.
No existe. Nada esperes. Ni siquiera
En el negro crepúsculo la fiera.[43]

VI

The universe as a disconcerting labyrinth is described in "The Library of Babel." This library, a central image for Borges, consists of "spiral stairway[s]," "narrow hallway[s]," and duplicating mirrors:

> The universe (which others call the Library) is composed of an indefinite and perhaps infinite number of hexagonal galleries, with vast air shafts between, surrounded by very low railings. (p. 51)

Borges also describes the library-universe in Pascalian terms: "*The Library is a sphere whose exact center is any one of its hexagons and whose circumference is inaccessible*." (p. 52)

The researchers in this library do not desire to escape from this labyrinth. They strive to discover meaning within. Their task of finding an order to the cataloguing is formidable. They toil in vain from infinite hexagon to hexagon:

> There are five shelves for each of the hexagon's walls; each shelf contains thirty-five books of uniform format; each book is of four hundred and ten pages; each page, of forty lines, each line, of some eighty letters which are black in color. (p. 52)

Each letter may combine with others in various possibilities. The epigraph by Burton alludes to this inexhaustible permutation: "by this art you may contemplate the variation of the 23 letters..." (p. 51) Diverse philosophical schools, the idealists, the mystics, and the nihilists propose various theories concerning the ordering of books in the library. It was later believed that one book held the key to the plan of the labyrinth. In this book, "the inconceivable middle page would have no reverse." (p. 58) Moments of elation, however, were subdued when the book could not be located. Various sects used dice "to mimic the divine disorder." (p. 56) The purifiers burned all the small books. As a last resort, The Man of the Book, the Librarian, who must have "the formula and perfect compendium of all the rest," was worshiped as a god. (p. 56) To find this Librarian, the labyrinthian conjectural or postponement system was utilized:[44]

> How could one locate the venerated and secret hexagon which housed the Man of the Book ? Someone proposed a regressive method: To locate book A, consult first a book B which indicates A's position; to locate book B, consult first a book C, and so on to infinity.... In adventures such as these, I have squandered and wasted my years. (p. 56)

Reviewing the theories imagined and after exploring the library - labyrinth, the narrator of "The Library of Babel" concludes that order may be found in the disorder. This idea makes it possible for him to live meaningfully inside the labyrinth.

> The Library is unlimited and cyclical. If an eternal traveler were to cross it in any direction, after centuries he would see that the same volumes were repeated in the same disorder (which thus repeated, would be an order: The Order.) My solitude is gladdened by this elegant hope. (p. 58)

Borges presents a vision of the universe that is desolate and without any salutary accretion. Our view is shared by Updike in "The Author as Librarian":

> We move, with Borges, beyond psychology, beyond the human, and confront, in his work, the world atomized and vacant. Perhaps not since Lucretius has a poet so definitely felt men as incidents in space.[45]

It is remarkable, nevertheless, that a tragic sense of the human condition is absent from this story and from all Borges' art.

> Il en émane un sentiment de grandeur, de subtilité, de pathétique, mais tranquille. L'inquiétude qu'elles suggèrent ne déborde jamais la beauté du récit; elles sont dans une région où le tourment ne parvient que sublimé.[46]

In an other order of thought, let us note that Borges' short stories not only employ the labyrinth image, they _are_ labyrinths. Borges constructs a poem or a short story as if it were a "labyrinth of labyrinths." (p. 23) Like Ts'ui Pên in "The Garden of Forking Paths," Borges' stories are "artistic," "architectural," and "symmetrical" labyrinths. Ts'ui Pên had announced that he was writing a book and that he was building a labyrinth. It was only discovered afterwards that the book was the labyrinth.

> _I am withdrawing to write a book._ And another time: _I am withdrawing to construct a labyrinth._ Every one imagined two works; to no one did it occur that the book and the maze were one and the same thing. (p. 25)

Borges' craft is similar.

Use of erroneous footnotes and complicated bibliographies are only one of the many methods by which Borges weaves his design to lead his reader astray in his labyrinth of art, or in the words of Bénichou, "d'un récit qui serait lui-même labyrinthe."[47]

To conclude our study of labyrinth images in six representative works of Borges, it may be of interest to suggest other modes of presentation of this topic, and to review Borges' definitions of the labyrinth. One method, as proposed by Imbert, would be to examine the labyrinth as: "laberintos como construcciones en el espacio o en el tiempo, como formas de la realidad o de la mente, como hechos o como alegorías."[48] Another method would be the investigation of all levels of interpretation encompassed in the labyrinth symbol: "la imagen surge reiterada en implicados planos, fisico u optico, onirico, psicologico, metafisico, religioso o puramente literario, ..."[49]

In retrospect, two observations may be drawn from our brief study of various labyrinth figurations. To Borges, there are two kinds of labyrinths: those devised by gods and those devised by men. On the one hand, the labyrinths constructed by gods are disorderly and chaotic and cannot be deciphered. In "The Immortal," Borges defines the labyrinth as: "a structure compounded to confuse men; its architecture, rich in symmetries, is subordinated to that end." (p.110) On the other hand, the labyrinths constructed by an architect or an artist are orderly and decipherable.[50] This is very well illustrated in "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius", "Tlön is surely a labyrinth, but it is a labyrinth devised by men, a labyrinth destined to be deciphered by men." (p. 17-18) Therefore, in our study of labyrinth configurations, the natural and the contrived labyrinths oppose each other. Desert sands, islands, and the universe are more intricate and undecipherable labyrinths than the labyrinths of Crete, of modern cities or even of Borges' short stories.

NOTES

[1] This term is from the title of Ana Maria Barrenechea's book: *Borges the Labyrinth Maker*, trans. Robert Lima (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1965).

[2] Borges began using the image after an accident in 1938. His first stories which utilize it are: "Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius," originally published in *Sur*, No. 68 (mayo 1940), 30-46; "La loteria en Babilonia" *Sur*, No. 76 (1941), 70-6 and "La biblioteca de Babel" in the collection of short stories *Ficciones* (1935-1944) (Buenos Aires: Sur, 1944). See E. Rodriguez-Monegal, "Symbols in Borges' Work," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 19, No. 3 (Autumn 1973), 333.

[3] Jacques Réda, "Commentaire de L'Immortel de Jorge-Luis Borges," *Cahiers du Sud*, 54, No. 370 (fév.-mars 1963), 445.

[4] L.S. Dembo, "An Interview with Jorge Luis Borges," *Contemporary Literature*, 11, No. 3 (Summer 1970), 317.

[5] *Entretiens avec Jorge Luis Borges* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969), pp. 131-32.

[6] Ibid., pp. 124-25.

[7] *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 192.

[8] Ronald J. Christ, *The Narrow Act. Borges' Art of Allusion* (New York: New York Univ. Press, 1969), p. 170.

[9] *The Invention of Morel and Other Stories*, trans. Ruth L. C. Simms (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1964), p. 6.

[10] In one of Borges' lectures on Poe, this point was affirmed. See Barrenechea, *Borges the Labyrinth Maker*, p. 60. Poe's technique is discussed by Richard Wilbur, "The House of Poe," in *Poe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Regan (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), pp. 98-120.

[11] Borges' wrote an essay on Chesterton's art of writing detective stories: "Los laberintos policiales y Chesterton," *Sur*, No. 10 (jul.1935), 92-4. The influence of Chesterton on Borges is reviewed in Christ, *The Narrow Act. Borges' Art of Allusion*, p. 115.

[12] "On Chesterton," *Other Inquisitions 1937-1952*, trans. Ruth L.C. Simms (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1964), p. 83.

[13] "Valéry as Symbol," *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, p. 197.

[14] See Ronald Christ, "A Modest Proposal for the Criticism of Borges," *The Cardinal Points of Borges*, ed. Lowell Dunham and Ivar Ivask (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 9.

[15] The phrase "the braided labyrinth of smells," is from "The Other Tiger," *Selected Poems 1923-1967*, ed. Norman Thomas di Giovanni (London: Allen Lane, 1972), p. 143. All other phrases are from: *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*: "a labyrinth of flames," "The Theologians," p. 121; "labyrinths of the god," and "fate's labyrinthine laws," "The Lottery of Babylon," pp. 32, 33; "labyrinth of letters," "The Library of Babel," p. 53; "the labyrinths of our dreams," " 'Paradiso,' XXXI, 108," p. 239; "maze of metaphysics," "Prologue" to "A New Refutation of Time," p. 217; "labyrinth of tigers," "The God's Script," p. 171; "maze of indefatigable mirrors," "The Immortal," p. 116; "a labyrinth of symbols," and "a labyrinth of labyrinths," "The Garden of Forking Paths," pp. 25, 23.

[16] *Borges the Labyrinth Maker*, p. 62.

[17] Symbols in Borges' Work," p. 332.

[18] Obra Poética 1923 - 1964 (Buenos Aires: Emecé Editores, 1964), p. 146. "No oprimirá un odiado laberinto/ de triple hierro y fuego dolorosa/ las atonitas almas de los réprobos."

[19] "Epilogue," (October 31, 1960), *Dreamtigers*, trans. Mildred Boyer and Harold Morland (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970), p. 93.

[20] "Elegy," (1964), *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, p. 251.

[21] *The Aleph and Other Stories 1933-1969*, trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni and Jorge Luis Borges (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1970), p. 83. Subsequent quotations from "Ibn Hakkan al Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth," and the accompanying short work "The Two Kings and Their Two Labyrinths," are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[22] Carlos Navarro, "The Endlessness in Borges' Fiction," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 19, No. 3 (Autumn 1973), p. 403. The desert and the city are juxtaposed labyrinths in: "The Two Kings and Their Two Labyrinths," "The Immortal," "The Waiting," "Death and the Compass," and "Story of the Warrior and the Captive."

[23] *Labyrinths: Selected Stories and Other Writings*, ed. Donald A. Yates and James E. Irby (New York: New Directions, 1964), p. 86. Subsequent quotations for all five remaining short stories to be studied are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[24] "Conjectural Poem," *Selected Poems 1923-1967*, p. 97.

[25] Victor Brombert, "Esquisse de la prison heureuse," *Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, 71, No. 2 (mars-avril 1971), 255. The labyrinth image as a refuge is affirmed by Brombert: "Le héros de *l'Ecriture de Dieu*, acceptant son destin, retourne avec joie à sa demeure carcérale."

[26] The moment of revelation is underlined by Borges in an essay: "A Note on Carriego," *Other Inquisitions 1937-1952*, p. 32. Here he writes: "I suspected once that any human life, however intricate and full it might be, consisted in reality of *one* moment: the moment when a man knows for all time who he *is*." This moment at the center of the labyrinth, explains Frank Dauster, is the moment "which virtually all Borges' characters seek." See "Notes on Borges' Labyrinths," *Hispanic Review* 30 (1962), 146.

[27] "The Labyrinths of Jorge Luis Borges: An Introductory to the Stories of *The Aleph*," *Modern Language Quarterly*, 20, No. 3 (Sept. 1959), 265.

[28] His "épreuve initiatique" is studied by Jacques Réda, "Commentaire de *L'Immortel* de Jorge-Luis Borges," p. 445. Marcel Brion in "Masques, miroirs, mensonges et labyrinthe," studies the initiation pattern of the story "Approach to al-Mu'tasim." *L'Herne*, 1964, pp. 317-22.

[29] Borges has been inspired by Piranesi. See Ronald J. Christ, *The Narrow Act: Borges' Art of Allusion*, p. 201.

[30] In an interview, Borges has stated his main idea behind this story: "J'essaierais d'écrire tout simplement l'histoire de quelqu'un qui, à la fin de sa vie, se souvient. Il sait qu'il a vécu trop longtemps .... C'est au fond l'idée que des possibilités infinies sont liées à un temps infini. Un peu l'idée du retour éternel des pythagoriciens, de Young, de Nietzsche, de Blanqui, etc." See Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Jorge Luis Borges*, p. 122. An excellent essay on the theme of eternal recurrence is Roger Caillois' "Les Thèmes fondamentaux de J.L. Borges," *L'Herne*, 1964, pp. 211-17.

[31] "The Cyclical Night," *Selected Poems 1923-1967*, p. 93.

[32] The landscape of "The Immortal," inspired by the name of the hero, by the "burning desert" and by the chaotic city, may be seen as hell, another figuration of the labyrinth.

[33] Enrique Anderson Imbert, "Un cuento de Borges: 'La casa de Asterión,'" *Revista Iberoamericana*, 25, No. 40 (1960), 43. This critic ends his article with: "Borges es Asterión, el Minotauro."

[34] Borges said that: "To a painting by Watts, made in 1896, I owe "The House of Asterion" and the character of its poor protagonist." See E. Rodriquez-Monegal, "Symbols in Borges' Work," p. 335.

[35] Imbert, "Un cuento de Borges: 'La casa de Asterión,'" p. 37, "es alusión al laberinto que mandó construir Amenemhat 111, faraón de la X11 dinastía que vivió alrededor de 2300 a. de C. (Es el laberinto que describieron Herodoto y Plinio el Viejo.)"

[36] "The Minotaur," trans. Norman Thomas di Giovanni and Jorge Luis Borges (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1969), p. 159.

[37] Rodriguez-Monegal, "Symbols in Borges' Work," p.332: "In the center of the labyrinth is the monster, or the god, since monstrosity is sometimes a divine attribute as shown by the metamorphoses in Greek mythology."

[38] "The Minotaur," pp. 158-9. Here, Borges alludes to Dante's mistake in describing the monster. He "imagined the Minotaur with a man's head and a bull's body (Inferno, X11. 1-30)." However, if one returns to the designs on ancient coins, Apollodorus' view of this minotaur is the more correct: "He had the face of a bull, but the rest of him was human." *The Library*, trans. Sir James George Frazer, 2 vols. (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1921), p. 305.

[39] Rodriguez-Monegal, "Symbols in Borges' Work," p. 336.

[40] *Selected Poems 1923-1967*, p. 241.

[41] "The Minotaur," p. 158.

[42] Dembo, "An Interview with Jorge Luis Borges," p. 318. This idea can also be found in Borges' short story "Ibn Hakkan al-Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth," *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 82.

[43] *Elogio de la Sombra* (Buenos Aires: Emecé, 1969), p. 47.

[44] Another example of this conjectural labyrinth image may be found in "The Approach to al-Mu'tasim": "the hint that the Almighty is also in search of Someone, and that Someone of Someone above him (or Someone simply indispensable and equal), and so on to the End (or rather, Endlessness) of Time, or perhaps cyclically." *The Aleph and Other Stories*, p. 32.

[45] *New Yorker*, 30 Oct. 1965, p. 245.

[46] Paul Bénichou, "Le Monde de José [sic] Luis Borges," *Critique*, 8, No. 63-64 (août-sept. 1952), 685.

[47] Paul Bénichou, "Le Monde et l'esprit chez Jorge Luis Borges," *Les Lettres nouvelles*, 2, No. 21 (nov. 1954), 681. This critic also notes here that: "L'étude de ces structures narratives à travers son oeuvre serait du plus grand intérêt, et ne peut manquer d'être faite quelque jour." The labyrinth image as symbol of art is the subject of Neil D. Isaacs' article: "The Labyrinth of Art in Four Ficciones of Jorge Luis Borges," *Studies in Short Fiction*, 6, No. 4 (Summer 1969), 383-94.

[48] Anderson Imbert, "Un cuento de Borges: 'La casa de Asterión,'" p. 41.

[49] Ana M. Sugden de Otero, "El mito del laberinto en la obra de Jorge Luis Borges," *Cuadernos del Sur*, 6-7 (1967), 144. This critic attempts to present a rapid view of the labyrinth image in all of Borges' works.

[50] The diverse opinions of Borges' definition of the labyrinth have been presented by Barrenechea and James Irby. Barrenechea sees it as " the exitless labyrinth where Man wanders erringly finally becomes the double symbol of the Infinite and chaos." *Borges the Labyrinth Maker*, p. 61. James Irby sees it as: "an endlessly wandering disorder, but which has, nevertheless, a secret center and a symmetrical order, cyclically self-contained." "The Structure of the Stories of Jorge Luis Borges," Diss. Univ. of Michigan, 1962, p. 276. For a further discussion of this controversy see Frances Wyers Weber, "Borges's Stories: Fiction and Philosophy," *Hispanic Review*, 36, No. 2 (April 1968), 133.

CHAPTER V

ALAIN ROBBE-GRILLET

Robbe-Grillet, in an interview, has specifically stated his interest in the labyrinth image. Its prevalence as an architectural form in the modern world overwhelms him. He has transposed this form, which is inherent to the age, in all his works.

> Cette forme labyrinthique que l'on retrouve dans tous mes livres, dans tous mes films, est une chose qui m'intéresse, que j'ai envie d'interroger. J'ai l'impression que tout ce que l'homme construit, à l'heure actuelle, ce sont des labyrinthes; alors qu'un architecte du XVIIIe siècle, quand il construisait une ville, cherchait à produire quelque chose de reposant, de rassurant, où l'on puisse vivre tranquille. Un architecte moderne, aussitôt qu'on lui donne un projet à faire, il se met à dessiner un labyrinthe: les H.L.M., les cités de luxe en béton armé, ou même l'univers quotidien des couloirs du métro qui est un labyrinthe horrible et merveilleux. Comme mon propos est de parler de ce monde dans lequel je vis, les éléments qui me viennent directement sous la plume ou la caméra, ce sont évidemment ces murs qui nous enferment et nous écrasent: la peur, l'angoisse, le sadisme, etc. Oui, le labyrinthe m'apparaît comme un matériau qui demande à être parlé. Il se trouve que j'ai découvert en Tunisie des labyrinthes merveilleux, mais beaucoup plus anciens, tel ce village où la jeune fille erre à la fin du film. (L'Eden et Après)[1]

Not only has Robbe-Grillet avowed that the labyrinth is recurrent in his art, he insists that it should be interpreted at a very literal level. After the publication of Dans le labyrinthe, he explained that the image is above all an expression of the immediate concreteness of man's environment.

> ... un labyrinthe, c'est-à-dire un chemin qui a toujours l'air guidé par des parois strictes, mais qui, néanmoins, à chaque instant, conduit à des impasses et oblige à revenir en arrière, à repasser plusieurs fois aux mêmes endroits sur des parcours plus ou moins longs, à explorer une nouvelle direction et à retomber sur une nouvelle impossibilité.[2]

The use of one fundamental image, the labyrinth, characterizes all of the 'nouveau roman' writers. Its main function is to illustrate repetition, circularity and ambiguity. With respect to this image and its many various figurations, Astier notes:

> L'image du labyrinthe (ou des images isomorphes telles que: la ville inconnue, aux rues qui se croisent, aux maisons identiques; la forêt, aux arbres et allées semblables, où l'on se perd et tourne en rond; l'île, avec son contour circulaire, ses chemins qui ramènent aux mêmes endroits), est si fréquente chez les nouveaux romanciers qu'elle pourrait être considérée comme une sorte de commun dénominateur de l'imagination néo-réaliste.[3]

A few major influences linked with the labyrinth image in the 'nouveau roman' should be mentioned: the Baroque aesthetic, new ideas on space and the interest in 'anti-mythe.' The Baroque is preoccupied with the infinite permutation of images and their reflection. Its purpose is to demonstrate how man is lost in a maze of the real and of the unreal. Jean Rousset in _La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France_ indicates that the Baroque writers were concerned with "à la fois l'oeuvre et la création de cette oeuvre."[4] Likewise, the process of writing is an important theme to modern novelists.[5] Phenomenology, the techniques of modern cinema and the invention of a new physics are essential factors in the renovation of the spatial dimensions of new novels.[6]

Three main ideas will be discussed with reference to Robbe-Grillet's use of the labyrinth image: the separation of man from the world, the absence of metaphors and the preeminence of form in a novel. One of Robbe-Grillet's major premises is that man is radically separated from the world. The universe and man exist; they do not co-exist. The world stands at one extreme and man at the other. Man, independent and alone, is alienated from this world without meaning; he is a "conscience aliéné." Due to the non-relation of man with the world, life is no longer tragic. In the essay "Nature, humanisme, tragédie", Robbe-Grillet writes:

> Et cette absence de signification, l'homme d'aujourd'hui (ou de demain ...) ne l'éprouve plus comme un manque, ni comme un déchirement. Devant un tel vide, il ne ressent désormais nul vertige. Son coeur n'a plus besoin d'un gouffre où se loger.
> Car, s'il refuse la communion, il refuse aussi la tragédie.[7]

The labyrinth image in his works visually expresses this distance of man from the world. In his novels, the "alienated world is more often than not expressed by a concept of the labyrinth ... which suggests that the novels themselves are constructed with the labyrinth as their dominant symbol,... "[8]

A subsequent clause to Robbe-Grillet's belief in the estrangement of man is his theory against metaphorical language. He opines that an author must avoid the establishment of links with the exterior world. Metaphors should be abolished since they create "un rapport constant entre l'univers et l'être qui l'habite."[9] To Robbe-Grillet, objects and events have no ulterior dimension or message. This notion is elucidated in his "Avertissement" to the novel Dans le labyrinthe: "Il s'agit pourtant ici d'une réalité strictement matérielle, c'est-à-dire qu'elle ne prétend à aucunne valeur allégorique."[10] (The term labyrinth image to designate Robbe-Grillet's art is accurate if it remains at a very literal level.)[11]

The alienation of man from his world is conveyed vividly by the form of Robbe-Grillet's novels. It is his contention that the formal construction reveals the novelist's vision. Form is the essential content of a work of art. In the essay "Sur quelques notions périmées," he affirms:

> ... une fois l'oeuvre terminée, ce qui frappera le lecteur, c'est encore cette forme qu'on affecte de mépriser, forme dont il ne pourra souvent pas dire le sens de façon précise, mais qui constituera pour lui le monde particulier de l'écrivain.[12]

In an interview with L'Express, Robbe-Grillet declared that the inspiration for his novels and films originates not with an idea but with an intimation of an architectonic form like the labyrinth: "... le projet d'écrire est toujours plus ou moins un projet de forme."[13]

Following this survey of Robbe-Grillet's aesthetic ideas necessary to understand his art and relevant to our topic, let us now turn to a few short stories and novels. The labyrinth is an intrinsic image in his short stories collected in Instantanés, in novels like Les Gommes and Le Voyeur, and in films like L'Année dernière à Marienbad and L'Eden et Après.

It is informative to note that Robbe-Grillet's first project for a novel centered on the Ouroboros figure. This archetype of the Gnostic snake is often compared to a labyrinth.[14]

Labyrinth images proliferate in Robbe-Grillet's Instantanés. "Le chemin du retour," "La Chambre secrète," "La Plage," and "Dans les couloirs du métropolitain" will be of particular interest. An island is the labyrinth image in "Le Chemin du retour." Three men trapped on this island search for an exit. According to Pingaud, an island labyrinth is: "... la parfaite image de cet univers clos où toutes les routes se croisent et que l'on ne peut explorer sans revenir au point de départ."[15] In "La Chambre secrète," a dying woman lies on a couch while the criminal escapes. The room is like a mysterious vault at the center of the labyrinth. It is a tomb in the same manner as the early Egyptian temples. This story consists of two movements: the killer had first to reach the center and then seek to escape from the maze. In contrast to the closed room in "La Chambre secrète," the labyrinth image in "La Plage" is open. Three children walk along a vast and deserted beach. A flock of birds fly in front of them. The straight line labyrinth drawn by the children and the birds on the horizon could be compared to Achilles and the tortoise.[16] Their itinerary could continue infinitely. Three variations on the motif of repetitious fixity and mobile immobility may be found in "Dans les couloirs du métropolitain" with its short scenes: "L'Escalier mécanique," "Un souterrain," and "Derrière le portillon." To conclude, let us note that all these involuted spatial constructs bear the imprint of the labyrinth design: "tout espace, chez Robbe-Grillet, est labyrinthique."[17]

Les Gommes and Le Voyeur are two novels which incorporate the labyrinth image and which we will discuss briefly. Les Gommes is imbued with the enigmatic climate of a detective story. The hero, Wallas, searches for a murderer. He circles the city in the hope of finding him. His trajectory is labyrinthine:

> Il est revenu jusqu'à la place ... avec l'intention de rejoindre le Boulevard Circulaire...; mais il s'est fourvoyé dans un labyrinthe de petites rues, où les coudes brusques et les détours l'ont obligé à faire beaucoup plus de chemin qu'il n'était nécessaire.[18]

Although the Oedipus myth has often been suggested, the Theseus myth applies equally well in interpreting this novel; "... le parcours-dédale et la démarche-perdition --... justifieraient un rapprochement tout aussi éclairant avec la légende de Thésée dans le labyrinthe."[19]

This Theseus - Oedipus figure confronts the labyrinth and answers the sphinx.

In *Le Voyeur*, circle imagery describes various objects. The road on the island, the bicycle, the cord and the birds all trace the figure eight. "In this structure, the eyes, the symbol eight (8), the sign for infinity ∞, and the labyrinth are all wedded."[20]

Furthermore, Robbe-Grillet's films, *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* and *L'Eden et Après* include the labyrinth image. The entire action of *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* happens in a luxurious, baroque hotel. The film begins by suggesting this setting.

> ...je m'avance, une fois de plus, le long de ces couloirs, ces galeries, dans cette construction -- ... une succession labyrinthique de couloirs et de salons, donnant la même impression de parcours lent et continu,... [21]

The guests are prisoners in the corridors and rooms of this villa. The author in his introduction to this ciné-roman indicates that the building is a closed architectural labyrinth: "... ce monde clos, étouffant, hommes et choses semblent également victimes de quelque enchantement.... isolé du monde extérieur, et qui ressemble à une prison."[22] Apart from the fundamental theme of man lost in an architectonic design, a man-made labyrinth, the world of irreality and dreams may be considered as a mental labyrinth. Robbe-Grillet has also suggested this particular dimension which constitutes the film: " tout le film est en effet l'histoire d'une persuasion: il s'agit d'une réalité que le héros crée par sa propre vision, ... c'est au milieu de quel dédale de fausses pistes, de variantes, d'échecs, de reprises!"[23]

In the film L'Eden et Après, labyrinths of all types create an atmosphere of absolute void and confinement. The sand, the sea, the houses, the corridors, the cages, the factories and the spiders are a few of the images that contribute to produce the effect of total subjugation in an enclosure. As the heroine attempts to escape from one prison, she becomes trapped in another. Thus she moves through a succession of closed and opened labyrinths. Gardies intimates this view when he states that:

> La séquence de l'usine, celle des ruelles du village tunisien nous invitent à retrouver le labyrinthe (constante de l'oeuvre robbe-grilletienne); cet espace, dont la caractéristique est d'être à la fois ouvert et sans issue, s'oppose aux lieux clos du film, à tous les moments où les personnages sont plongés dans le noir ... c'est-à-dire la prison.[24]

An extensive and profound analysis of the labyrinth image in all of Robbe-Grillet's films and novels would be profitable and desirable since it has never been studied. However, we must limit ourselves to one representative work, Dans le labyrinthe. From the above survey of the employment of the labyrinth in Robbe-Grillet, one salient conclusion may be drawn. Foremost, the labyrinth is always the structural setting of his novels and films. In the words of Michel Raimond, these invariable environments are archetypal:

> ... chaque roman nous présente un univers clos, fermé sur lui-même, et un espace réduit à l'essentiel (...); c'est le couloir, l'escalier, la maison, la ville avec ses rues et ses carrefours, au point qu'on pourrait parler de lieu archétypique.[25]

These settings may be divided into two distinct types. From one perspective, there are the architectural labyrinths as a building or a city. From another perspective, there are the geographical or natural mazes as deserts, islands and forests. This dichotomy is clearly delineated by Alter: "des lieux fermés, circonscrits, encerclant les personnages.... à l'intérieur, l'enchevêtrement des passages; à l'extérieur, canaux, mer, murailles, jungle."[26]

Dans le labyrinthe is constructed on two interwoven plots: the soldier lost in the city, the narrator enclosed in the room. The narrator perceives and describes the objects in this room and focuses on the form of a cross on the table, the fissure and a painting. As he looks at the dust on the floor, he thinks of the soldier outside and his tracks in the snow. The novel then sets out to recount the soldier's itinerary. Yet this soldier will die before ever reaching his destination. His search in the city is circular. He encounters closed doors, follows labyrinthine paths and finds himself always at the same intersection and lampost.

For our purpose, the plan of our study on Dans le labyrinthe adopts and develops Michel Raimond's distinction between the opposition of the labyrinth image as an opened and closed space. On the one hand, the open structure "désigne une dispersion, une errance, une déréliction," while the closed space is associated with:

> l'intimité d'un secret et d'un accomplissement. Cette opposition définit la structure du Labyrinthe. ... Cet espace de l'intimité close de la chambre, dont aucune rumeur ne franchit jamais les parois, contraste avec l'espace, dehors, de l'errance labyrinthique.[27]

As an open spiral that coils outward, the labyrinth depicts the theme of "égarement", as a closed spiral that coils inward, the labyrinth portrays the secret chamber in which death or artistic creation await its prisoner.

In Dans le labyrinthe, these demarcations are evident in the two settings: the city streets and the room. Movements from the outside to the inside or vice versa are repeated throughout the novel. This contrast of "dedans-dehors" is perceptible from the very beginning:"Je suis seul ici, maintenant, bien à l'abri. Dehors il pleut, dehors on marche sous la pluie en courbant la tête,..."[28]

In our analysis of the novel, therefore, we will first study the spiral form, a space where the soldier loses his way. In this open labyrinthian area, our main concern will be with the circuitous city streets and with the itinerant in the center. After investigating the labyrinth image _in_ the novel, we will analyze the labyrinth image _of_ the novel. The book itself is a labyrinth and the narrator is the prisoner in the center. The narrator's room as the place of artistic creation is crucial to this interpretation of the novel.

The modern city is the dominant architectural labyrinth image in the text. Identical uniform rows of apartments, sidewalks, windows and doors characterizes this monotonic urban geographical setting.

> Ce doivent être des rangées toutes semblables de fenêtres régulières, se répétant à tous les niveaux, d'un bout à l'autre de la rue rectiligne. (p. 15)
>
> ...une nouvelle succession de fenêtres et portes identiques, qui paraissent être l'image des premières, comme si un miroir avait été dressé là, faisant un angle obtus (...) avec le plan des façades; et la même série se répète: deux fenêtres, une porte, quatre fenêtres, une porte, etc. (p. 22)

In this cityscape, streets bifurcate, doors and corridors remain closed or inexorably coil to other corridors or lead nowhere. The oblique, the vertical or the horizontal styles of such structures are without meaning. These symmetrical series are supererogatory:

> Au lieu des perspectives spectaculaires auxquelles ces enfilades de maisons devraient donner naissance, il n'y

a qu'un entrecroisement de lignes sans signification....(p. 16)

One of Robbe-Grillet's leitmotif is such a presentation of a stark and otiose world. This atmosphere of 'le vide' is created primarily by "la même perspective sans profondeur" (p. 49) of the urban landscape.

> La platitude de tout ce décor ferait croire, d'ailleurs, qu'il n'y a rien derrière ces carreaux, derrière ces portes, derrière ces façades. Et toute la scène demeure vide; sans un homme, ni une femme, ni même un enfant. (p. 25)

Apart from the entire city as a labyrinth, a more particularized one is a building itself, a maze within a maze.

> ... un corridor obscur, sur lequel donnent plusieurs portes. A l'autre bout se devine l'amorce d'un escalier, qui s'élève dans le prolongement du corridor et se perd vite dans le noir. Le fond de cette étroite et longue entrée donne aussi accès à un autre couloir, perpendiculaire, signalé par des ténèbres plus épaisses, juste avant l'escalier, de chaque côté de celui-ci. Tout cela est vide,... (p. 58)

Now that we have investigated the imprisoning environment, let us focus our attention on the soldier "dans le labyrinthe." In his slow peregrination in the strange city, he wanders ceaselessly in the circular streets. His footsteps in the snow trace a labyrinthine design: "il tournait en rond dans le quadrillage des rues identiques." (p. 40-41) As Michel Raimond states, the soldier is in "un espace piégé ... il marche droit, mais ... tourne en rond."[29] The soldier's only action is to constantly wander in search of the person to whom he must give the box. However difficult and obstructive the detours and impasses are, he persists in his endeavor.

> Il hésite encore un moment, regarde à nouveau devant lui, puis, derrière lui, le chemin qu'il vient de parcourir, jalonné par l'alignement des lampadaires .... Puis il s'engage, sur sa droite, dans la rue perpendiculaire, déserte aussi, bordée de maisons identiques, où se succèdent, assez éloignés les uns des autres mais à intervalles réguliers, les mêmes lampadaires.... (pp. 33-4)

The soldier's wanderings in this open labyrinth is interminable. Since no advance is ever possible, his rotations or "errance-déréliction" 30 around lamposts and buildings finally deteriorate into fixity. He opts for transfixion at the center of the labyrinth. This theme of waiting is illustrated in the following example:

> Le soldat, au pied de son réverbère, attend toujours, immobile, les deux mains dans les poches de sa capote, le même paquet sous son bras gauche. Il fait jour de nouveau, le même jour terne et pâle. Mais le réverbère est éteint. Ce sont les mêmes maisons, les mêmes rues désertes, les mêmes couleurs blanche et grise, le même froid. (p. 43)

From the soldier's point of view, all these similar enclosures and labyrinthine courses cannot be deciphered. Indeed, he is isolated and directionless at the center. Whenever asked any question about himself or his goal, he answers "Je ne sais pas." A striking case in point is the conversation he has with the woman.

> "C'est quel régiment?" dit-elle....
> "Je ne sais pas," dit le soldat....
> --Non, ce n'est pas ça .... Mais cette capote-là n'est pas la mienne."
> ...."Et à qui appartenait-elle?
> --Je ne sais pas," dit le soldat. (pp. 75-76)

An even more revealing episode, the youth 's question to the dying soldier, is apposite.

> "Pourquoi tu es ici?
> -Je ne sais pas", dit le soldat. (p. 214)

Due to his illness and delirium, the soldier is subsequently confined to a room in the barrack. Here again, like in the city, he must quest in vain. In one scene, the soldier must walk in dark and narrow serpentine corridors in order to quench his thirst.

> En dépit de sa gorge brûlante, il n'a plus la force de recommencer sa tentative, de s'avancer dans le

> dédale des couloirs sans lumière, jusqu'à cette eau infiniment lointaine et problématique. (p. 131)

Having considered the tortuous ambulations of the soldier, his hallucinatory mind may be seen as another labyrinthine space. Because of fever and delirium, his normal perception is distorted. He views his immediate surroundings from another level of reality. His illness, his fear of the unknown, and his imagination transforms and contorts the existing cityscape. In this mental labyrinth, the soldier recreates his own reality based on his own mode of perception. A clear and concrete representation of this psychic labyrinth occurs when the soldier returns to a room in the barrack:

> ..., pris de panique, il s'aperçoit que les fenêtres, les fausses fenêtres peintes en noir contre le mur, se trouvent à présent sur sa gauche.... Tous les yeux sont grands ouverts et le regardent passer, dans un silence total. (p. 129-130)

In order to escape from these urban and mental labyrinths, the soldier, in the end, encounters death at the center. He was a "doomed Theseus, an anti-hero with no Ariadne to hold the thread of his adventures."[31] After having journeyed through multiple labyrinths, the soldier, lying on his deathbed, strives to trace successfully his last labyrinth, a fissure on the drawer chest:

> ... la fissure, mince comme un cheveu, à peine sinueuse, dont la forme, elle aussi, a quelque chose d'à la fois précis et compliqué, qu'il serait nécessaire de suivre avec application de coude en coude, avec ses courbes, tremblements, incertitudes, changements de direction subits, infléchissements, reprises, légers retours en arrière, mais il faudrait encore du temps, un peu de temps, quelques minutes, quelques secondes, et il est déjà, maintenant, trop tard. (p. 229)

Death was the soldier's sole method of deliverance from the labyrinth of life:

> il trouve la mort au bout de son itinéraire: c'était
> la seule, et nécessaire, manière de sortir du labyrinthe.[32]

Apart from the open labyrinth in which the soldier wanders, there is in Dans le labyrinthe a closed room in which the narrator constructs a 'labyrinth of art.' We will now study the labyrinth image not in the novel, but of the novel. Three major topics will comprise this discussion: "le dédale de la création romanesque"[33] or the author in the labyrinth, the book as a labyrinth, and the reader in the labyrinth.

Let us first give particular attention to the narrator-author in the labyrinth of artistic creation. Accordingly, the narrator is the hero in the task of imagining and telling a story.

> The title is not "The Labyrinth," but "In the Labyrinth." ... the inner author,... is seen as the real protagonist, ... As this writer attempts to build from the materials in his room (a steel engraving of a soldier in a café, a shoe box, a bayonet, etc.) a coherent novel, his stops and starts, revisions and alterations, give rise to the image of the labyrinth,....[34]

All elements of the story about the soldier originate from the portrait "La défaite de Reichenfels" which the narrator has in his room. This painting furnishes the decor, the objects and the characters for the development of the story. Morrissette considers the painting as a center in the labyrinth: "il y a un centre où convergent tous les fils d'Ariane possibles: c'est le tableau."[35] This painting is both the point from which the artistic narration begins and to which the story must return to be comprehended whole. Through the repetition, the variation and the modification of various forms represented in the painting, the story evolves. Heath summarizes these important functions of the painting:

> It is from and to that inscription, a point of semantic fixity that opens a range of possibilities in its reading, that the adventure of the writing runs, ceaselessly working and reworking the basic set of narrative elements.[36]

As the writer - narrator attempts to tell his story, the act of writing may be compared to a person groping his way in a labyrinth. This process of creative composition is a journey through the dark passageways of one's psyche.[37] While writing, the author must struggle with language and ideas. As he searches for the right path, he is often obstructed by dead ends, advances and retreats. Infinite possibilities of events, thoughts and words could be chosen by the author - narrator in order to contrive his novel. Indeed, writing is a Mallarméen 'throw of dice.' For example, when the narrator describes a building, he hesitates, he bifurcates, he stops and he alters; rejection and modification of material is necessary:

> ... porte, couloir, porte, vestibule, porte puis enfin une pièce éclairée, et une table avec un verre vide dont le fond contient encore un cercle de liquide rouge sombre, et un infirme qui s'appuie sur sa béquille, penché en avant dans un équilibre précaire. Non. Porte entrebâillée. Couloir. Escalier. Femme qui monte en courant d'étage en étage, tout au long de l'étroit colimaçon où son tablier gris tournoie en spirale. Porte. Et enfin une pièce éclairée: lit, commode, cheminée, bureau avec une lampe posée dans son coin gauche, cercle blanc. Non. Au-dessus de la commode une gravure encadrée de bois noir est fixée ... Non. Non. Non. (pp. 102-3)

To complement the topic of the artist in the labyrinth of novelistic construction, we may note that the novel itself is a labyrinth. Such an interpretation is suggested in Albérès' remark:

> ... on est pris dans une histoire qui se répète, comme un disque détraqué, avec des variantes pourtant, sans que l'on sache distinguer la réalité du rêve ou des hallucinations de la fièvre et de la nuit. Le livre lui-même est un "labyrinthe."[38]

Important stylistic techniques contribute to give the novel its labyrinthine form: unchronological order, similar and repetitious scenes with slight alterations, transpositions, and sentence variations.

The unchronological order of presentation in *Dans le labyrinthe* heightens the labyrinthine atmosphere. The story, as Morrissette asserts, "s'organise autour d'un dédale spatial qui exige son correspondant dans le temps."[39] The succession of events is not linear but circular: " de quelque chose comme un labyrinthe où, pour trouver l'issue, *on tourne en rond*."[40]

The similarity of multiple scenes also enhances the involuted climate of the novel. The major characters and situations are repeated constantly throughout the story. One example demonstrates this:

> C'est cependant ce même gamin, à l'air sérieux, qui l'a conduit jusqu'au café tenu par l'homme qui n'est pas son père. Et c'était une scène semblable, sous un même lampadaire, a un carrefour identique. (p. 38)

This repetition of similar scenes causes confusion, ambiguity and uncertainty.

> Ce gamin-ci est celui du café, semble-t-il, qui n'est pas le même que l'autre, qui a conduit le soldat (ou qui le conduira, par la suite) jusqu'à la caserne— (p.155)

This technique of repetition and slight variation of scenes has been analyzed by a few critics and has proven to be one of the most outstanding and basic labyrinth images *of* the novel. Gérard Genette underlines the use of identical scenes which are slightly altered to create a disconcerting and vertiginous space where the itinerant - hero is caught in a maze of the similar and yet of the different. In his excellent essay, "Vertige fixé," Genette considers the labyrinth as an accurate and propitious image to embody this style:

> Le labyrinthe, espace privilégié de l'univers robbegrilletien, est cette région qui fascinait déja les poètes baroques, région déroutante de l'être où se rejoignent, dans une sorte de confusion rigoureuse, les signes équivoques de la différence et de l'identité.[41]

In the same manner as the scenes, the sentences are also constructed on the principle of the repetition of the similar and the slightly different. To illustrate this technique, two sentences at the outset of the novel may be contrasted:

> Dehors il pleut, dehors on marche sous la pluie en courbant la tête, s'abritant les yeux d'une main tout en regardant quand même devant soi, quelques mètres d'asphalte mouillé...

> Dehors il y a du soleil,... et l'on marche en plein soleil, s'abritant les yeux d'une main tout en regardant devant soi, à quelques mètres seulement devant soi, quelques mètres d'asphalte poussiéreux où le vent dessine des parallèles, des fourches, des spirales. (p. 9)

In addition, notice how the words "parallèles," "fourches," and "spirales" seem to indicate the very movement of the sentence and of the novel as a whole.

The concept of repetition resumes the stylistic techniques utilized to construct a labyrinthine novel. "Différence et répétition, c'est tout l'art du Nouveau Roman.... Tout l'espace de Robbe-Grillet est comme un labyrinthe optique, il procède au retour constant du même ou de l'analogue."[42]

Since the artist is at the center of a labyrinth of art, and the novel form is labyrinthine, it follows that the reader is also in the labyrinth. From the moment he opens the book, the reader is engaged in the process of deciphering clues, and pursuing scenes and sentences that progress and regress.

> ... le lecteur tourne en rond dans le labyrinthe du roman, de sorte que le mouvement, le progrès dans l'espace et dans

> le temps ne sont qu'apparents. Au fond, l'impression que garde le lecteur une fois le livre terminé, c'est d'avoir piétiné sur place.[43]

Certainly, Robbe-Grillet's art gives the reader "l'impression qu'il est enfermé."[44] The author himself, in a 'prière d'insérer' for Dans le labyrinthe, drew particular attention to this:

> Le lecteur, lui non plus, ne voit pas les choses du dehors. Il est dans le labyrinthe aussi. Sans cesse tenu en haleine, bien que se demandant sans cesse où il va, il vit lui-même cette aventure étrange et rigoureuse, où tout lui apparaît comme nécessaire, où rien cependant ne lui laisse prévoir la fin.[45]

NOTES

[1] André Gardies, Alain Robbe-Grillet (Paris: Editions Seghers, 1972), p. 117. This statement was made in an interview for "Cinéastes de notre temps."

[2] Alain Robbe-Grillet, "En retard ou en avance?" L'Express, 8 oct. 1959, p. 32. The metaphysical dimension of his novel, however, may be studied. The author knows this is inevitable. "Il y a une part de métaphysique dans ce livre. On ne peut pas décrire un couloir vide sans que la métaphysique aussitôt s'y engouffre." p. 33.

[3] "Images mythiques: le labyrinthe," La Crise du roman français et le nouveau réalisme (Paris: Nouvelles éditions Debresse, 1968), p. 288.

[4] La Littérature de l'âge baroque en France: Circé et le paon (Paris: José Corti, 1954), p. 61.

[5] See Stephen Heath, The Nouveau Roman: A Study in the Practice of Writing (Philadelphia: Temple Univ. Press, 1972).

[6] These topics are discussed in Astier, "Images mythiques: le labyrinthe," and Michel Raimond, "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau roman," Positions et oppositions sur le roman contemporain (Paris: Editions Klincksieck, 1971).

[7] "Nature, humanisme, tragédie," Pour un nouveau roman (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963), p. 66.

[8] Andrew White, "Labyrinths of Modern Fiction: Max Frisch's "Stiller" as a Novel of Alienation, and the 'Nouveau Roman,'" Arcadia, 2, No. 3 (1967), 298. White studies the labyrinth image in Frisch, Robbe-Grillet, Sarraute, and Butor.

[9] Robbe-Grillet, Pour un nouveau roman, p. 60.

[10] Dans le labyrinthe (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1962).

[11] Unaware critics use the term "labyrinth metaphor." However, outstanding critics of Robbe-Grillet like Astier, Raimond, Heath, Genette and Morrissette utilize the word "image" to connote the visual, the mythical and the formal aspects of the labyrinth.

[12] Pour un nouveau roman, pp. 49-50.

[13] Robbe-Grillet, *L'Express*, p. 32. He also writes: "C'est toujours dans cette forme que réside l'apport spontané du créateur, en même temps que l'objet de sa recherche. C'est elle qui constitue l'oeuvre d'art: car le vrai contenu de l'oeuvre d'art, c'est sa forme." p. 32.

[14] Bruce Morrissette, "Games and Game Structures in Robbe-Grillet," *Yale French Studies*, 41 (1968), 161.

[15] "Alain Robbe-Grillet," *Ecrivains d'aujourd'hui 1940 - 1960. Dictionnaire anthologique et critique* (Paris: Grasset, 1960), p. 424. This statement is made for *Le Voyeur* but is applicable here.

[16] This comparison is suggested by Gun-Britt Svensson, "Un 'Nouveau roman': *Dans le labyrinthe* d'Alain Robbe-Grillet," *Moderna Sprak*, 57, No. 3 (1963), 331.

[17] Raimond, "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau roman," p. 188.

[18] *Les Gommes* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1953), p. 85.

[19] Ludovic Janvier, "Alain Robbe-Grillet et le couple fascination - liberté," *Une Parole exigeante: le nouveau roman* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1964), p. 114. The Oedipus myth in *Les Gommes* has been studied by Bruce Morrissette. See, "Oedipe ou le cercle fermé: *Les Gommes*," in *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1963), pp. 37-75.

[20] Enrico Garzilli, "The Myth of the Labyrinth and the Self," *Circles Without Center. Paths to the Discovery and Creation of Self in Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1972), p. 114. For this topic, see also Dorrit Cohn, "Castles and Anti-Castles, or Kafka and Robbe-Grillet," *Novel*, 5, No. 1 (Fall 1971), 23 and Bruce Morrissette, *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet*, pp. 96-97.

[21] *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1961), pp. 24, 26.

[22] "Introduction," *L'Année dernière à Marienbad*, pp. 13-14.

[23] Ibid., p. 12.

[24] *Alain Robbe-Grillet*, p. 85.

[25] Michel Raimond, "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau

roman," p. 184.

[26] *La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet. Structures et significations* (Genève: Droz, 1966), p. 97.

[27] "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau roman," p. 189.

[28] Alain Robbe-Grillet, *Dans le labyrinthe* (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1964), p. 9. Subsequent quotations from *Dans le labyrinthe* are taken from this edition and page numbers will be indicated in the text.

[29] "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau roman," p. 187.

[30] Janvier, *Une Parole exigeante: le nouveau roman*, p. 27. I use his term "errance - déréliction."

[31] Peter Cortland, "The Landscapes of Robbe-Grillet," *Critique*, 6, No. 3 (Winter 1963), 97.

[32] Alter, *La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet. Structures et significations*, p. 47.

[33] This expression is the title of Morrissette's chapter on *Dans le labyrinthe* in *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet*.

[34] Bruce Morrissette, "The Evolution of Narrative Viewpoint in Robbe-Grillet," *Novel*, 1, No. 1 (Fall 1967), 24-33.

[35] *Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet*, p. 161.

[36] Heath, *The Nouveau Roman: A Study in the Practice of Writing*, p. 150.

[37] Georges Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Michel Butor* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), pp. 118-9. Butor also uses the image of the labyrinth in this context. In an interview, he states: "Au départ, on se tape la tête contre les murs. Tous les instruments sont vraiment les bienvenus. Quand on est dans un souterrain, dans le noir, si quelqu'un vous apporte une lampe de poche, personne ne refusera cette lampe au nom de quelque inspiration que ce soit. On espère tant qu'elle vous aidera à regarder ce qu'il y a autour de vous et à trouver votre chemin, à l'intérieur de ce souterrain, de ce labyrinth...."

[38] R. M. Albérès, "Le Pathétique et le baroque," *L'Aventure intellectuelle du XXe siècle. Panorama des littérature européennes 1900-1963* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1959), p. 398.

[39] Les Romans de Robbe-Grillet, p. 178.

[40] Yves Berger, "Dans le labyrinthe," La Nouvelle revue française, 8 (1960), 115.

[41] "Vertige fixé," Dans le labyrinthe (Paris: Union générale d'éditions, 1964), p. 304.

[42] Raimond, "L'Expression de l'espace dans le nouveau roman," pp. 186-7.

[43] Elly Jaffé-Freem, Alain Robbe-Grillet et la peinture cubiste (Amsterdan : J.M. Meulenhoff, 1966), p. 66.

[44] Astier, "Images mythiques: le labyrinthe," p. 288.

[45] Alter, La Vision du monde d'Alain Robbe-Grillet. Structures et significations, p. 38.

CONCLUSION

In a last analysis, let us summarize the main points concerning our study of the labyrinth image in representative works of our four authors. To Joyce, the image is utilized as both an open and closed construct where the protagonist is at once a prisoner and an initiate. Accompanying this, the theme of descent into hell is of major significance. In regards to Kafka, the labyrinth is only a closed structure. The wanderer endlessly pursues his path without ever attaining a center. The themes of the inaccessible, of the interminable are fundamental to this author and correspond to the journeyer's incapability of reaching a center. In Borges' short stories, we have distinguished the opposition that exists between the natural and the contrived labyrinths, the indecipherable and decipherable mazes, those created by the gods and those built by man. Finally, in Robbe-Grillet's novel, there is the open labyrinth where the soldier wanders and the closed room where the artist writes.

Hence, we may recognize that Joyce, Kafka, Borges and Robbe-Grillet employ a common image and its various figurations such as islands, forests, caves, corridors and cities. We may also establish that due to our authors' use of a common image, their themes are similar and related.

This conclusion in regards to our authors was the aim of our thesis. However, when one considers the tradition of the labyrinth which we briefly outlined in our first chapter and in our appendix, we realize that this conclusion is but the beginning. The method which I have developed in explicating these authors could be applied to many other structures and settings in literature, and could be used effectively to understand other authors who have employed the labyrinth image and its many figurations. This area of study is open to new and valuable research.

In the field of novelistic literature alone,[1] the modern tradition of the labyrinth is prolific and has not yet been studied.[2] In chapter one, our slight survey of a few major modern novelists and their use of the labyrinth image was necessarily brief and incomplete. Let us now suggest a few other noteworthy novels: Raymond Roussel's Locus Solus (1914), Hofmannsthal's Andreas oder die Vereinigten (1932), Nikos Kazantzakis' Thésée (1953), Jean Reverzy's Le Passage (1954) and Le Corridor (1958),[3] Max Frisch's Homo Faber (1957), Lawrence Durrell's The Dark Labyrinth (1964), Roger Zelasny's The Dream Master (1968), Julio Cortazar's Rayuela (1969), Ernesto Sabato's El Tunel (1970), and Françoise Mallet-Joris' Le Jeu du souterrain (1973).

The image of the underground and of hell in modern novels may be considered as variations of the labyrinth construct. We may note in this instance novels as: Dostoevsky's Notes from Underground (1864), Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness (1902), Ralph Ellison's The Invisible Man (1947), Malcolm Lowry's Under the Volcano (1947), Albert Camus' La Chute (1956), and Solzhenitsyn's The First Circle (1968). The image of the prison in modern literature, for example, in Rilke, Malraux, Sartre, Koestler and Frisch, is, in fact, but another form of the labyrinth.[4] A subject worthy of further investigation is, surely, that of the labyrinth in modern literature.

NOTES

[1] To modern poets as Mallarmé, Yeats and Dylan Thomas, whom we have not mentioned in our study, the labyrinth image is also fundamental.

[2] The labyrinth has been the subject of two well-documented books: W.H. Matthews, *Mazes and Labyrinths: A General Account of their History and Developments* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1922) and Paolo Santarcangeli, *Il Libro dei labirinti. Storia di un mito e di un simbolo* (Firenze: Vallecchi Editore, 1967). The more recent book completes the lacuna of the other. However, both do *not* include literary works in their research. Only one sentence in Santarcangeli's interesting book concerns modern literature: "... e lo stesso atto dell'andare à già un merito e ogni ritorno è un ritorno d'ulisse (modernamente in Joyce e in Kafka, con alto senso di poesia)." p. 199.

[3] Jean Reverzy in "Un jour...," *Les Lettres nouvelles*, 7, No. 21 (sept. 1959), writes: "Certes le thème du corridor et, à un degré de complexité supérieure, celui du labyrinthe, infeste la littérature." pp. 12-3. The novelist John Barth in "The Literature of Exhaustion," *The Atlantic*, August 1967 defines the labyrinth as: "a place in which, ideally, all the possibilities of choice ... are embodied, and ... must be exhausted before one reaches the heart." p. 34. His novel *Lost in the Funhouse* is based on the labyrinth image. This novel is studied in a very recent book: John Vernon, *The Garden and the Map: Schizophrenia in Twentieth-Century Literature and Culture* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973, "The labyrinthian world of Robbe-Grillet returns us to Barth and Pynchon and the labyrinthian plots that structure their novels." p. 75.

[4] It is remarkable, in view of the interest in comparative literature to such heroes as Orpheus, Prometheus, or Ulysses, that the myth of Theseus and of the labyrinth is not the subject of scholarly research. See for example: W.B. Stanford, *The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1954), Eva Kushner, *Le Mythe d'Orphée dans la littérature française contemporaine* (Paris: Nizet, 1961), André Dabezies, *Visages de Faust au XXe siècle: littérature, idéologie et mythe* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1967), Walter A. Strauss, *Descent and Return: The Orphic Theme in Modern Literature* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1971).

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